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EUSEBIUS:
OR THE
TRUE CHRISTIAN'S
DEFENSE
AGAINST
A LATE BOOK
ENTITLED THE
Moral Philosopher.

By **JOHN CHAPMAN M.A.**
Fellow of King's College in CAMBRIDGE.

Hæc aliæque, quæ ex novâ istâ vocabuli *Christiani* deflexione manant absurda, absônâ quamplurimis & exosâ eam sine dubio reddent. Ego verò, si sic voce illâ Vir doctus abuti velit, facilè suo sensu eum abundare patiar — Ita tamen si se expedire laboraverit, crimini nec mihi nec omnibus sapientibus dabit, si magno eum cōatu nugæ venditâsse — dixerimus.

Mosheim. Vindic. &c. p. 248.

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THE

JOHN

LORD ARCHBISHOP



MY

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THE

GRACE

TO
THE MOST REVEREND
HIS GRACE
JOHN
LORD ARCHBISHOP
OF
CANTERBURY,
PRIMATE and METROPOLITAN
OF ALL
ENGLAND

MY LORD,

THE Subject and De-
sign of the following
Work, begun by your
a 2 GRACE'S

The DEDICATION.

GRACE'S Encouragement, will, I trust (whatever Blemishes and Imperfections in the Execution may appear to so discerning an Eye) be an Excuse for the Presumption of this Address, and give me some Title to hope for your candid Perusal and favourable Acceptance.

It is the general and just Sense, My LORD, both of the Clergy over whom you preside, and our Universities, whom you honour with the warmest Zeal and Affec-

THE DEDICATION

Affection, that Endeavours for the Publick Good, especially in the Advancement of true Religion, and in Support of the *Christian* in particular, are of all others the most agreeable Offerings which Inferiors can tender to your GRACE, as coinciding with the generous Aims and Pursuits of their Great Patron.

MAY we all direct our Studies and Labours to the noble Ends, which your GRACE appears ever to

THE DEDICATION.

have at Heart, and may we
in Imitation of so bright an
Example render each of us
in proportion to our several
Abilities, the excellent Li-
terature of *Rome* and *Athens*
subservient to the *Christian*
Cause; to which I beg leave
to add with every true
Friend to this Church and
Nation, a Third Wish, that
your GRACE may long en-
joy the Glory and Happi-
ness, of adorning the high
Station you possess, with a
Piety, Learning, Wisdom,
and Integrity, as little need-
ing

The DEDICATION.

ing the Panegyric of private
Pens, as fearing the most
censorious Criticisms of the
Publick.

I am, My LORD,

Your GRACES most dutiful

most oblig'd

and most obedient Humble Servant

Cambridge
Nov. 26. 1738.

JOHN CHAPMAN.

The DEDICATION.

ing the Park
as feeling the most
of the

Public
THE following is a Part
only of what I desire against
the Moral Philosopher, my
intention from the first, being to ex-
amine his system of
that Writer, as it affects the Old
Testament or New. And the System
which I propose to reject is the
Work, as I. I consider the Grand
Criterion of all Divine Truth, or
Revelation in general, is the Mo-
ral Truth, Reason, and Sense of
Things, as founded in the Natural
and necessary Relations of Persons,
and Things. It is evident every mor-
tal suggestion of an agent, the E-
vidence to any other Revelation from
Miracles or Prophecy, and those
which are the Subjects of the

JOHN CHATMAN

THE
PREFACE.

THE following Sheets are a Part only of what I design against the Moral Philosopher, my intention from the first, being to examine distinctly the whole System of that Writer, as it affects either Old Testament or New. And the Scheme, which I propos'd to myself in the Work, was 1. To consider his Grand Criterion of all Divine Truth, or Revelation in general viz. The Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things, as founded in the Natural and necessary Relations of Persons and Things. 2. To obviate every artful Suggestion of his against the Evidence to any divine Revelation from Miracles or Prophecy, and those likewise against the Authority of Tradition

THE PREFACE.

dition or Human Testimony, by which the Proofs and Doctrines of a divine Revelation are convey'd to succeeding Ages; as likewise his insidious Exceptions to the Propriety of a Divine Faith founded upon it in such Circumstances. In all which Articles, the Foundations and Authority of the Christian Religion are deeply and plainly concern'd; and being moreover struck at openly by many Principles of this Christian Deist, I thought myself oblig'd to guard particularly against any ill Effects of this kind.

3. I descend to what he styles the Jewish Christianity i. e. either those Doctrines in the Christian System, which concern the Quality of Jesus Christ as the great Messiah of the antient Prophets, his Atonement, or Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind, and the Terms of Salvation procur'd for us by his Merits and Sufferings: Or those Ritual Observances of Baptism

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Baptism and the Lord's Supper, founded on express Commands of our Lord in the Gospel; which together with the Doctrines above this pious Christian explodes as Jewish Superstitions, and no parts of genuine Christianity. 4. I should proceed to a particular Vindication of the Jewish Prophets, from the many injurious Reflections and Calumnies, by which the same Author with the rankest Malignity endeavours to vilify those excellent Men. And in the last place, would conclude with the Jewish Law, as appearing to the greatest Advantage in this Order of things; since every Part preceding would administer so much Light and Strength to it, as in Conjunction with other Arguments of various kinds, might perhaps make our Moral Philosopher blush for his unparallel'd Contempt and Reproaches of

THE PREFACE.

of it, or at least make others of more Modesty blush for him.

Now were the Advocates for Divine Revelation and Scripture, allow'd or expected to treat the Reader like our Adversaries, an Answer to our Moral Philosopher, might easily have been publish'd in a short time, and a short Compass too upon all these Points. For 'tis obvious to every one, that three Parts in four of his Book consist only in bold positive Assertions, heap'd together in much Confusion and Ambiguity, without any distinct Proof, or any notice of many former Replies to the same Principles. All which therefore require in reason no other answer but positive Assertions to the Contrary, with a reference to those who have treated more fully of the Subject. And as to the remainder, a Pamphlet of no immoderate size might express so much as the Force of the Objections

THE PREFACE.

Objections could in strictness demand.

But as every Word from these Men, being generally pronounc'd with inimitable Assurance and Sufficiency, is apt to be consider'd as of mighty Importance, and carries often a pestilential kind of Breath along with it, I was willing for the sake of many Readers, to enlarge more copiously on several Points, than the Weight of my Author's Philosophy requir'd; and finding that I could not execute my whole Scheme in the manner I intended, without too great Delays, I have publish'd apart what, I hope, will be an useful Preservative against the most dangerous Positions of the Christian-Deist. The Criterion of Divine Truth or of Doctrines coming from God, the Evidence of Divine Revelation, of Original by Miracles, and Traditional upon Human Testimony, and the Christian particularly in both those Views, with the other

THE PREFACE.

Other Articles in this Volume, are Points which I thought proper to clear up fully from every Difficulty that has been started, not only because they are Points of the last Consequence, but because I am well assur'd and it is probable in itself, that common Believers are most liable to be puzzled and stagger'd concerning them, by those Enemies of ours who never fail taking every Advantage, from Things or Persons to gain their Ends. If what is here offer'd should prove of real Service against Deceivers, I shall think my Time very well employ'd, and be the less dissatisfied with myself for not appearing sooner.

As to my Author's Declamatory Invectives against the Clergy, I am not apprehensive, that they will prejudice any Reader of Understanding and Probity, against the Writers of that Order. *Obsoletæ dudum sunt ejus generis querimonie, as a*
great

THE PREFACE.

great Man (a) observ'd upon the like occasion; such Complaints and Calumnies from our most polite Sceptical Adversaries are grown so trite and familiar for these hundred years past, as to lose all their Edge and Significancy, and serve only now for emblazon'd Arms to that worthy Fraternity, without surprizing or hurting any Mortal. They may one after another ring Diana of Ephesus in our Ears as long as they please, and trumpet it to the World, that
"Religion is the word, while the
"Silversmiths mean nothing but their
"Shrines. A Reproach, which the Annals of almost every Nation and our own in particular can wipe off to their Confusion, attesting what I never desire these Men to feel, besides the sharpest Afflictions of other kinds, the intrepid Martyrdom of hundreds among the Clergy in Blood and

(a) *Moham. Vindic.* p. 4.

Flames

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Flames, for the sake of Truth and a good Conscience. And whatever these Gentlemen may insinuate of modern Ecclesiastics, they may rest assured, that were a Storm to rise at this Day upon the Christian Church, there would not be wanting those and in great Numbers too, whom no Shrines, no secular Interests, no Terrors of the World could shake from their profession, and influence to renounce their Faith, or desert their People. In the mean time those who for ends of their own will traduce the Labours, and mistrust the sincerity of that Order without such a Trial, must be left to enjoy their own kind Suspicions, and express as usual their exemplary Charity and Moderation.

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1. That

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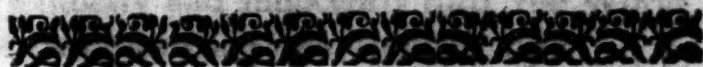
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PHILALETHES
ADDENDA

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quires concerning Moral Obligation from
the natural Tendency of Things that be-
tag for right or wrong, or present
and would lead the too far out of the

Pag. 62. *Enthusiasti*] read *Enthusiasti*.
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P. 110. *When I see the world* of the Sun

When I see the world of the Sun
an apparition and combat one in the
ingenious the word fixed is given to this
a Moral Philosophy in opposition to the Platonic and
Dogma which you speak of writing re-
quires, the Dialogue ought have been I ve-
ry closely and accurately the World.
the

INTRODUCTION.

TO
PHILALETHERS,

THE
Christian Deist,
OR
Moral Philosopher.

INTRODUCTION.

HAD you express'd, *Philaethes*, in your late extraordinary Dialogue, that sincere *Affection* for *Truth* which your Name imports, that ingenuous *Impartiality* which becomes a *Moral Philosopher*, and that Propriety of *Debate*, which your Species of writing requires, the Dialogue might have pass'd very quietly and innocently thro' the World, without needing one Remark upon it, or

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INTRODUCTION.

the least Antidote against it. Your *Jewish* Antagonist alone, had you given him leave, might easily have prevented any ill Impressions from thence, and stifled perhaps your favourite *Christian-Deism* in its Birth. He might have rallied you so smartly for your Quibbles, Witticisms, Parallels, and vulgar Rants against *Divines*, and answer'd so roundly and solidly every serious Difficulty, which you urge, that *Philaletbes*, I'm afraid, would have gain'd but little Honour and Triumph in the End, and suppress'd perhaps every Insult upon *Theologasters*, *Pulpiteers* &c. and every blustering Defiance of all Opponents. But you wisely provided against any Mischief of this kind, by the Choice of your Adversary; your resolution it seems, was to be the *Hero* of the *Dialogue* yourself, and Victorious for once over the *Christian Jews* at all Events, whatever might become of your *Reader*, *Truth*, and *Decorum*. Accordingly you present the World with a mere *Farce* instead of a real *Dispute*; setting up one *Theophanes* in the Form of an Opponent, who of all the Disputants that were ever introduc'd into Dialogue, is surely the most empty and insignificant, a shallow obsequious Animal, that

only

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INTRODUCTION.

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is nothing in Effect but a mere Dupe and Tool to *Philaletbes*, nodding and yielding all along with most profound Complaisance and respect to every *Quirk*, which *You* play upon Him, and never uttering hardly a Sentence for himself, that is worth the Attention of a Reader, or an answer from a sage *Philosopher*. The poor Man by your kind allotment has no *Parts*, no *Letters*, no *Logic*, no *Divinity*, utterly destitute of all proper weapons *offensive* and *defensive*. And with these sad Accomplishments is *He* made to represent all *Judaizing* Doctors, that is, to represent such Men as *Grotius*, *Pufendorf*, *Hooker*, and *Stillingfleet*, all concern'd deeply in this Cause, for which *Theophanes* is to plead as the Advocate. Now as such is *notoriously* the Image of a Man you contend with, I think 'tis no wonder, if *Judaism* as you term it makes a sorry Figure in *his* Hands, or if your *Wit* and *Acumen* should prove, as it does, much too mighty for *Him*: the greatest Wonder is, that you should think such a Conquest worth gaining, or expect any Credit and Applause from it. For such Arts as these are too palpable to every Man of common Understanding, to pass off unobserv'd; the most negligent

A 2

Reader

INTRODUCTION.

Reader would presently discern, that things were here *imperfectly* represented, industriously *disguis'd*, and *superficially* discuss'd. He would soon perceive insidious *Designs* lurking under the Pretence of detecting *Impostures*, and a Cause *betrayed* wilfully by a wretched *Defender* of it. And from hence he would know the Meaning of those declamatory Abuses of all *Ecclesiastics*, as Men it seems to be strongly calumniated, in order to lessen the *ill* Effects. which their *Character* and *Abilities* might possibly have upon the new Scheme. All which being apparent immediately, every *wise* and *honest* Man would suspect a *Snare*, and carefully avoid it; he would find you were not to be trusted *implicitly*, and would perhaps be much disgusted with such a *fraudulent* Attempt upon his Faith. And tho' he might not himself be able to discover every Fallacy in your Argument, and solve every Difficulty, yet at least he would *suspend* his Assent, and hear what others might plead for the *Law* and the *Gospel*, for *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*. So that if you could hope by such a sort of *Dialogue* for *Profelytes*, who would throw themselves immediately into your Arms, and swallow

INTRODUCTION.

swallow Your System without any farther Enquiry, it must only be those of a *fugitive Faith*, as *Sr. Thomas Brown* expresses it^(a), who are strongly dispos'd by Complexion to Paradox, most passionately fond of some pleasing *Delusions*, and therefore easily won and satisfied, without the tedious Formality of weighing Arguments and balancing Evidence. Such indeed, 'tis very probable, may take the Bait greedily in no small Numbers, and for such it might perhaps be in vain to oppose your *Moral Philosopher*. But the Honour of these Disciples is not much to be envied, while Men of another Stamp, of deeper Thought and more Judgment remain unmov'd, and attend impartially to the Merits of the Cause. It is their Favour only which deserves Esteem, and for them it is I step into the place of *Theophanes*, and renew the Debate with his Adversary.

HOWEVER in this large Undertaking of mine, I shall easily be excus'd, if I follow neither *Him* nor *You, Philalethes*, as to method, being utterly indispos'd to slide over Points of the highest importance in so negligent and superficial a manner, as your *The-*

(a) *Brown, Relig. Med. p. m. 54.*

INTRODUCTION.

ophanes has done, or to jumble together like You so many things of different kinds, or to start and ramble backwards and forwards from one Subject to another with so much confusion and intricacy, as seems rather design'd to puzzle and perplex, than to inform the Reader. I propose to digest your whole Discourse as well as I can, into some sort of order and series, to give a full and distinct consideration to all the *material* parts of it, and to preserve as much connection and perspicuity in the whole, as the matter in hand may require. Only please to observe, That wherever I see you indulging a present fit of ranting and railing against *Orthodoxy, Systems, Creeds, Pulpiteers*, and the like, without so much as the shadow of an Argument, I shall leave you undisturbed to the violent *Impetus* of the *Christian-Deistical* Spirit, and shall pass on quietly, till I find you recover'd a little to your Reason and senses.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

CHAP.
I.

Shewing, that the Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of things is no certain Mark, nor proper Criterion of any Doctrine as coming from God.

THE fundamental Principle of your whole *Philosophic* System you give us in the following words. "The *Moral* "Truth, Reason, and Fitness of things is "the *only* certain Mark or Criterion of any "Doctrine as *coming from God*, or, as making any part of *true Religion*. Pref. p. 8. So again in p. 85, 86. "There is one, and "but one, certain and infallible Mark or "Criterion of *Divine Truth*, or of any Doctrine, as *coming from God*, which we "are oblig'd to comply with as a *Matter of Religion and Conscience*: And that is, the "*Moral Truth, Reason or Fitness* of the "thing itself, whenever it comes to be fairly proposed to, and consider'd by the "*Mind or Understanding*. And to the same purpose you speak in p. 99, 345. If we ask the meaning of this *Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of things*, you tell us once

CHAP. for all, that "'tis founded in the *natural*

I. "and *necessary Relations* of Persons and
 "Things, *antecedent* to any *positive* Will or
 "Law, and therefore cannot be *alter'd* by
 "any *positive* Will, Law, or Authority
 "whatever. *Pref.* p. 8. Now in answer to
 all this, I will shew hereafter, that your
Moral Truth &c. is neither a *certain* and
infallible Mark of a Doctrine *as coming from*
God, nor any just *Criterion* at all of such
 Doctrines. But it is necessary first to exa-
 mine the terms you make use of. In the
 words above cited you leave the Reader to
 make the best that he can of your new *Cri-*
terion of *Divine* Truth, without any parti-
 cular explication of your phrases; which is
 certainly a *tacit* and very high compliment
 to his parts, as he must be supposed to be
wise and *acute* to a miracle, if with these
 short notices he takes your meaning *exactly*,
 and knows precisely the due *application* of
 your rule. For in truth, this *certain* and
infallible Criterion of yours is all over dark
 and ambiguous to such a degree, that, I be-
 lieve, not one Man in a thousand will com-
 prehend what it really is, and nothing but
 a very large comment can make it *generally*
 intelligible. To begin with your *natural*
 and

and necessary Relations (a) of Persons and Things, upon which your Moral Reason &c. is founded. They are capable of three at least very different senses, and according to each will produce a very different Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of things and actions. 1st. They may signify all Relations, whenever introduc'd and by what means soever discover'd, which arise immediately from the different Natures or States of Persons and Things; and then your Moral Truth &c. will be so far enlarg'd beyond due bounds, as to mix with all known Relations of what kind soever, even of those between Man and Beast, and Things inanimate (b); so that Truth universally will then be made (agreeably to a late most refin'd scheme) (c) the Subject and measure of Moral Right and Wrong. 2^d. These natural Relations may signify those, which arise directly from the busi-

CHAP.
I.
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(a) The true sense of this Term, and the Nature of the Things expressed by it, is well explain'd by Mr. Locke. Hum. Underst. B. II Ch. 25.

(b) Instances of this kind in Books and Drinking-Glasses may be seen in the following Author. p. 30. Where to tear the one or to break the other designedly, is declar'd to be morally wrong or evil, as being acts unsuitable to the nature of those two things.

(c) Wollaston. Relig. of Nat. p. 8, 13, 20, 26, 30.

CHAP. *man nature* (d) as *such*, antecedent to any voluntary act or covenant whatsoever, and commence with our very Being. Such for instance are those between *God* and *Man*, of Creature and Creator, Lord and Servant, Almighty and Dependent &c. from whence alone would result certain *Duties* of Man toward God, by virtue of our *humanity* itself. And such likewise between Man and Man existing together are those of *equality* in *nature*, and *likeness* of *condition* in mutual wants and infirmities, by which *equity* and universal benevolence would be rendred indispensably necessary to all and every individual, as the only certain means of securing to the whole, that ease, intercourse, and happiness, which must be the aim and end of all *rational* Beings. And farther, such are those Relations between Man and Things without him; by which as *some* things are noxious and pernicious both to his Body and Mind, and *others* are salutary and useful to both, so many duties regarding a Man's *self* both *negative* and *affirmative* would immediately take place, were there no other Man in the World beside him. But if *these* are the only *Relations* intended, *they* will be too

(d) See *Puffend. Law of Nat. B. I. c. 1. §. 7.*

few,

few, and your *Moral Truth* &c. will be too much restrain'd, as excluding all those Relations, which arise from occasional promises or particular covenants, and from adventitious States, as they are called (e), producing the Relations between Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Master and Servant, Magistrate and Subject, which must all be taken into the account, as the chief sources and proper sphere of the social virtues. Again 3d. your *natural Relations* may signify those, which result from the visible system of Things about us, and are known to us by the use of our mere *natural* faculties, and so are opposed to any others, which may arise from some extraordinary dispensation of Providence, and are discover'd to us only by *supernatural* Revelation. And then 'tis plain, your *Moral Truth* &c. of Things and Actions will be wholly confin'd to the former, without any notice and consideration of the latter. Now as such are the various senses of your *natural Relations*, how are we to learn your precise meaning concerning 'em, without some explicit definition of the terms? Till that is done, your

CHAP.
I.
W

(e) See *Puffend. Offic. Hom. & Civ. L. II. c. 2. & Annotat. ibid. Cl. Ottonis, Titii, Johnson, &c.*

very

CHAP. very foundations of Moral Truth &c. will

I. never be settled clearly in common understandings; and such a defect will of course attend the superstructure itself, which is raised upon them.

BUT were these *Relations* without any difficulty, we should still want your help for interpreting those phrases of *Moral Truth*, *Moral Reason*, and *Moral Fitness* of Things and Actions, in which there is likewise a great deal of obscurity and intricacy, and to form distinct and adequate Ideas about them is not so easy for every Reader, as you may imagine. The word *Moral* is a *relative* term, and refers to some *Rule* or *Law* of *Manners* (*f*), by which the Wills and Actions of Men are to be constantly governed. And this *Rule* or *Law*, to which it refers here, is that, I suppose, which is usually styl'd the *Law* of *Nature*, and the *Moral* Law by way of eminence, being that *supreme* and *original* Law of human *manners*, established upon the *nature* of *Things* by the great Creator of the Universe, and which is therefore eternal, universal, and unchangeable. It is call'd *eternal* (in the view of a *Law* to mankind, and in opposition to

(*f*) See *Lock. Hum. Underst. B. II. c. 28. §. 4 — 16.*

occasional positive Laws Divine or Human) CHAP. I.
as subsisting through all Ages from the very
Creation of our species, and continuing in
its force and obligation, as long as that exists.
It is likewise *universal*, as extending to the
whole race of Mankind in all places; I mean
hypothetically, that is, upon *supposition* of
their standing in such and such *Relations* to
God and to one another. And 'tis lastly *un-*
changeable in its *general principles*, as result-
ing from the *physical* constitution of Men
and Things, and therefore fix'd and perma-
nent as *Nature* itself, and while that is the
same, incapable of alteration (g). The *Du-*
ties prescrib'd by it are in *themselves* produ-
ctive of our *natural good*, and those Things
or Actions which are repugnant to it are as
certain causes of our *natural evil*; which
makes the observance of it *always* essential
and necessary to the *welfare* of our *rational*
system (h). And as *such* our very *Reason*
and *Conscience* approves and enjoins it, and
moreover discerns it to be the Dictate and

(g) See *Alphonf. Turretin. Oper. Vol. I. Dissert. VIII.*
§. 11.

(h) See *Cumberland Leg. Nat. capp. 1, 2.*
Puffendorf. Law of Nat. B. II. Ch. 3.
Parker. Demonstr. Law of Nat. §. 14, 7.

CHAP. Law of that supreme and gracious Being,
 I. who must ever will the *happiness* and *per-*
 fection of his *rational* Creatures, and of
 course those *means*, which his *own* frame
 and constitution of Things has rendred ab-
 solutely necessary to the attainment of it.
 From hence comes the notion of *moral good*
 and *evil* in Persons and Actions (*i*), accord-
 ing to their agreement or disagreement with
 the grand rule of Life and *Divine Law* a-
 bovemention'd. Persons are *morally good*
 in the *strict* and *proper* sense, not barely by
acting in conformity to the *reasons* and *na-*
tures of Things, but by acting in obedience
 to the *will* of *God*, as made known by those
reasons and *natures* of Things; with a view
 to which same Will of *God* the *moral Laws*
 of Nature are likewise denominat'd the *Re-*
ligion of Nature (*k*); a Thing which has no
 existence without a *God*, as all *Moralists*
 agree, and is a flat contradiction in terms.
 But to go on. *Actions* are *morally good* in
 common Language, which in themselves or
materially consider'd have a *natural* intrin-

(*i*) See *Cumberland. Leg. Nat. capp. III, IV.*

Puffendorf. B. I. c. vii.

(*k*) See the *Nature, Obligation, &c. of the Christian Sa-*
craments c. 3.

fic goodness in them or beneficial effects to Mankind, and are *supposed* to flow from *internal virtues* of the Agent, and are moreover *prescrib'd* by the terms of the *moral Law*. And from hence it is, that Things or Actions have the *moral Reason*, or *Fitness*, or *Truth*, which you speak of, that is in other words, a *Reason* and *Fitness* in their own nature to become matter of *moral Duty*. But here without great care Men are liable to much confusion and error, and many mistakes in fact have been lately committed for want of some just distinctions upon this Head. It is therefore to be observ'd, that Things or Actions may have this *moral Reason* and *Fitness* in two very different respects: either 1st. as falling *directly* under the prime injunctions of the *moral Law*, and being so necessary in *specie*, that they cannot be *supplied* by any thing else, nor the *Law* itself obey'd *without* them. Or 2^d. As being *real* and *natural* instances only of obedience to the Law, or *elicit* Acts of *moral virtues*, as the Casuists (1) term them, though not the *only means* of fulfilling the Law, nor indispensably requisite by the tenor of it. Of the former kind are the *moral Duties* of Men to-

(1) See Bp. Taylor. Duct. Dub. B. II. c. 3. Rule 6.

CHAP. ward God, such as Worship in Prayer,
 I. Praises, and Thanksgivings, and the Du-
 ties of strict *Justice* arising from Promises,
 Covenants, Contracts and the like, where
 the Things to be done are so *immediately*
 and *specially* determin'd by the principles of
 the Law, that Men are not at liberty to *omit*
 the performing them, or even to *exchange*
 them for others at pleasure (*m*). Cases of the
 latter kind occur in the duties of *Humanity*
 or *Charity*, and in those which are call'd
 the *Relative* and *Self-Duties*, where the af-
 firmative precepts of the *moral* Law are not
 only expressed in *general* terms, but include
 under them various *sorts* of Actions both
materially and *morally* good; *any of which*
 is sufficient to answer the demands of the
 Law, and therefore no *one* in *particular* is
 requir'd as *necessary* and indispensable. Thus
Charity in general is a duty eternal and im-
 mutable, and the inward principle of it must
never fail; but as the *species* or instances of
 it are numerous, we are not confin'd by the
general Law to any particular act or exercise
 of it, but are left to chuse *ad arbitrium* the

(*m*) I mean, in the duties of *Justice*, without the con-
 sent of *both* Parties.

sort

sort (n) of Charity, according to our private inclinations and abilities; and every species of it will have a *moral Reason and Fitness*, tho' not a *moral necessity*. So again; Parents are oblig'd by the Law of Nature to make *some good* provision for the temporal welfare of their Children; and every good provision proportionable to the state and condition of the Parent is obedience to the Law, and an act of *moral* goodness. But where there is variety of such good provisions in quantity and quality, *any* one of these satisfies the Law, and in *that* respect is *indifferent*, tho' *morally good* in itself. And thus lastly in the duties regarding a Man's self. *Temperance* is strictly commanded by the Law, and in the *general* must be practised universally; but here there is such a scope and latitude for the *exercise* of this duty, and so many degrees of it within the verge of criminal *Excesses*, that tho' *all real* acts and instances of *Temperance* are *good*, as conformable to the Law, yet no *particular* act within such and such limits of quantity and quality can be laid down as strict *invariable duty*. And so it is in many other

(n) See Bp. Taylor. *ibid.* Rule 13. §. 14.

Sherlock. *Def. of Stillingfleet.* p. 31,

CHAP. cases, of which these few are given only as

I. *specimens*, to shew the different extent of
Moral Reason &c. even in those actions,
 which are the *proper* effects and *practical*
 specifications of *Moral Principles*.

BESIDES these, there is a third sort of
 actions, to be consider'd more at large here-
 after, which have not indeed in *themselves*
 any *moral* intrinsic *goodness*, nor are they
proper acts of any particular *virtue*, as the
 others are, but yet are founded on *moral* Rea-
 sons, as being either in their *own* Nature or
 by positive *Institution* ministerial to our vir-
 tue and happiness, and therefore *useful* as
Means to those higher *Ends*. Of this kind
 are acts of Mortification and Self-Denial,
 and many other occasional observances either
 of *Divine* or *Human* appointment; which
 in this *instrumental* view may have various
 degrees of *Moral Fitness* and *Expediency*,
 according to the various circumstances and
 conditions of Mankind. But omitting these
 for the present, it is worth remarking, what
 crude imperfect notions those writers have
 entertain'd of *Moral Actions*, who appro-
 priate the terms of *Moral Reason* and *Fitness*
 to those *acts* only which are *necessary* du-
 ties; as if all those, which are not so, had

no

(o) See
 Protest. Re

no *Moral Reason and Fitness* at all in them; CHAP. I.
 which is evidently a gross mistake, and owing entirely to their not distinguishing the *general Principles* and *Laws* of moral duty from the outward *particular* acts, which are perform'd in pursuance of them. The consequence of which fallacious inaccuracy would be often this, that while the *Principles* or *Laws* themselves have all the *Moral Reason and Fitness* in the World, the several *Actions* immediately flowing from them, and occasion'd by them would truly have nothing at all of it; because take each of them singly by itself, and not one shall be *morally* necessary. The next step to this for the finishing stroke, was their making *Indifferents* in point of *Obligation* the same with *Indifferents* in *Use*, tho' common sense as well as common *Ethics* might have taught them better (o); as if truly, because every *particular kind* of wholesome food is purely *indifferent* to us in point of *Obligation*, and one may be taken as well as another, so long as the general *End* is secur'd, the preservation of Life and Health; therefore every *particular kind* of such food must be likewise

(o) See this farther explain'd by Dr. Sherlock. Answer to Protest. Reconciler. p. 34. — 39.

CHAP. *indifferent as to Use, that is, have no good-*

I. *ness, Reason or Fitness at all in it; tho' in*
 reality every kind does effectually answer
 the *End* abovemention'd, and is only *indif-*
ferent with respect to other kinds of whol-
 some food, which can *equally* produce the
 same desirable effect. Now with our Casuists
all indifferents must first be entirely *useless*,
 and then all *Laws* enjoyning 'em must be *ar-*
bitrary and *absurd*, and the Lawgiver himself,
 whoever he be, proclaim'd a perverse and un-
 merciful *Tyrant*. This was the perpetual er-
 ror and juggle of *Christianity as old as the*
Creation; and you, *Philaethes*, for want of
 due attention seem in this as in many other
 instances, to follow the Author of it. For
 as well as I can judge by comparing several
 scatter'd and distant passages together, those
 things and actions *alone* have with you this
Moral Reason and Fitness, which are *eter-*
nally and *directly* prescrib'd by the Law of
 Nature, as *necessary* and *indispensable* du-
 ties. Thus in your *Preface* p. 5. *Standing*
perpetual Obligations in the *Moral Truth*,
Reason, and Fitness of Things are oppos'd to
Things not necessary parts of Religion, and
 to *Actions in themselves indifferent*. And
 in p. 86. *Doctrines* which have this *Moral*
Truth

Truth &c. are call'd *Matters of Conscience*. CHAP.

In p. 92. *What we are oblig'd to receive*. I.

In p. 345. *Necessary to Salvation*, and in p. 347. *Eternal immutable Doctrines*; that is, in other words, ever *true*, and ever *binding* in themselves, antecedent to all *positive* Will and Law whatsoever. In this sense therefore I shall henceforth understand your *Moral Reason and Fitness of Things and Actions*, and now proceed to examine those high and mighty Powers you attribute to it.

You assert then very roundly in the passages cited above, that this *Moral Reason and Fitness* is both a *certain* and *infallible Mark and Criterion of a Doctrine as coming from God*, and also that 'tis the *only Mark and Criterion* of its being such. In the first of which two positions is implied, as I take it, 1st. That whatever Doctrine has this *Moral Truth, Reason, &c.* does certainly come from God, because it has then a *certain and infallible Mark* of its being such. And 2^d. That whatever Doctrine has *not* plainly in itself such *Moral Truth &c.* doth as certainly *not* come from God, and is no *Matter of Religion and Conscience*. These maxims I intend to discuss in the present Chapter, reserving the other for the following. To be-

CHAP. gin then with the first of your maxims, that

I. *Moral Truth, Reason and Fitness is a certain and infallible Mark of a Doctrine's coming from God.* By your phrase here of *coming from God*, you should mean, what the common use of the phrase imports, *revealed supernaturally* by God; otherwise your language would be affectedly singular and ambiguous, and besides quite foreign and impertinent to the present dispute; since the real question at this time must be, how a *Doctrine* or *Precept* may be prov'd to *come from God*, in the *extraordinary* and *supernatural* way; there being no dispute at all about the *ordinary* and *natural* one, in the sole use of our rational faculties. Now in the former sense of *coming from God* your *Doctrine* is truly very strange and unaccountable for a sage profound Philosopher, and unknown to any *Moral Philosopher* of note before this time. For if this be true, then *all Doctrines of this kind*, wheresoever found, and by whomsoever taught, whether Jew, Turk, Pagan, or Christian, antient or modern, past, present, or to come, are, it seems, to be esteem'd as *coming infallibly from God*. And thus if any *Doctrines* of this sort should occur in *your Moral Philosophy*,



losophy, or in that of *Confucius*, and *Mohammed*, they must presently come from God, and be stamp't with *Divine Authority*. And if *Aristotle*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, &c. or if the *Laws of Athens*, *Sparta*, and *Rome* teach any of these *Moral Principles*, those *Principles* must likewise come from God, and the Authors who teach them bid fair for *Apostolical Dignity*. Such, *Philaletbes*, are the worthy and *natural* consequences of your first maxim; and indeed you fairly own something very much like it by declaring, that "*if a Man speaks to you as from God, and could prove the natural Reasonableness and Fitness of the thing which he teaches, you should take it indeed as coming from God.*" p. 84. And I add, that, whether the Man *speaks to you as from God* or not, if what he teaches carries a *natural Reasonableness and Fitness* along with it, you ought by your excellent maxim to take it as coming from God; because if the *Reason and Fitness of the Thing* be a *certain and infallible Mark* at all of its coming from God, it is equally so without that other circumstance of the Man's *speaking as from God*. Otherwise your Mark would be *certain and uncertain, fallible and infallible*

CHAP. at the same time, fix'd at once inseparably

I. to the *Reason* and *Fitness of Things*, and yet
 dependent on something extraneous and accidental to both. Behold now, *Philaethes*, what fine instructions you give us for a guard against *Enthusiasm* and *Imposture* in Religion! By which every *Metaphysician* and *Moralist*, that has wit enough to season his Doctrines with this *Moral Reason and Fitness*, is raised up into a *Prophet* or *Evangelist*, and we his Disciples are forsooth to take all his lessons implicitly for *Divine*! Truly, *Philaethes*, if these are your real thoughts, you are more a friend to *Divine Faith*, than any one would imagine by your frequent *Sneers* of it; and I'll answer for all the *Christian Jews* this day in the Kingdom, that our new *Philosopher* carries it higher by many degrees, than all of them put together. But 'tis no wonder, that so strong a tincture of paradox should appear in a principle, that is manifestly false and absurd in itself. For as your *Moral Reason and Fitness* is founded in the *natural Relations of Persons and Things*, such a *Moral Reason &c. alone* in Doctrines is a certain *Mark* of nothing else, but of the *Truth* and *Reasonableness* of them. It only shews them

to

to be agreeable to the *natural Relations* of CHAP.
Persons and Things, and to arise directly I.
from them in the form of *Moral Duties*. 
But how they are *known*, and from what
Authority they proceed, whether from the
exercise of our natural faculties, or from
any *supernatural Revelation*, it does not in-
form us at all; because a Doctrine evident-
ly *true* and *reasonable*, and founded in those
natural Relations, might perhaps be the issue
and result of mere *Human Reason*, employ'd
in a diligent investigation of *Truth*, with-
out any particular discoveries from God.
And that which in the *nature* of it is *capable*
of coming from *Man*, can never from the
same internal *nature* of it *alone* be prov'd to
have *come from God*, *i. e.* in a way *superna-*
tural, as the words imply. You might as
well refer up to *God* all known *Truths* in
Mathematics or *Natural Philosophy*, and at-
tribute Sir *Isaac's Principia*, or *Euclid's E-*
lements, not to their genius and sagacity,
but to a special *Divine Revelation*. Where-
as *Truth* alone whether *natural* or *moral*
proves neither of these to be of *God* in the
proper sense, nor is it any indication at all
of their true Author and Original. I grant
indeed, that the *Moral* or *Religious Doctrines*
above-

CHAP. abovemention'd are *Marks* or Arguments to

I. us of something *Divine*, which the others have not, namely, of the *Divine Will* and *Pleasure* with respect to those *Doctrines*, by which they are known not only to be *Truths* in *Theory*, but *Rules* and *Laws* to our *Practise*; but *coming from God*, ought to mean something more than *requir'd by God*, namely *communicated* from him directly to Men, and bearing a *Divine Authority* as such; whereas your *Moral Reason and Fitness* alone in *Doctrines* proves nothing of this; it only makes the *Doctrine* *worthy* of God, and *capable* as such of coming from him; which nothing that is either *false* or *immortal* ever can do. And this has been so often observ'd by learned Men, such as *Tillotson* (p), *Scott* (q), *Clarke* (r) and many others, and is withal so plain in itself, that 'tis wonderful to me, how any *Philosopher* could escape it.

HOWEVER I am apt to suspect after all from one or two odd expressions, that you really descend to shuffling and quibbling with that phrase of *coming from God*, and

(p) *Tillotson*. Vol. II. p. 498. Fol.

(q) *Scott*. *Christian Life* Vol. II. Ch. 7. p. 622, 623, 8^{vv}.

(r) *Clarke*. *Evidences &c.* Prop. IX.

intend



Intend to amuse us with mere *Sounds* instead
of *Sense*. In p. 86. Reciting the several
ways, by which the Doctrines of Religion
may be convey'd to the mind, you men-
tion among others that of the *exercise of our*
natural faculties, and then subjoyn, "In
" whichsoever of these ways the Doctrines
" or Truths of Religion are convey'd and
" proposed to the mind, their Evidence and
" Proof as coming from God must be still
" the same, i.e. the *Moral* eternal Reason
" and Fitness of the Things themselves. A
sentence mysterious enough! And if owing
to Art, not to mere Blunder and Confusion
of Ideas, it conveys some curious hints of
your *occult Philosophy*, tho' we are much at
a loss to account for your Language. "In
" whichsoever of these ways viz. by *Inspira-*
" *tion*, or traditional mediate *Revelation*, or
" by the exercise of Men's *natural faculties*
" the Doctrines of Religion are conveyed
" and proposed to the Mind, their Evidence,
" say you, as coming from God must be still
" the same. Must it so? Then it seems
those Truths which are convey'd to the
mind by the *exercise of our natural faculties*
do in your new style come from God with
no less Evidence, than those which are con-
vey'd

CHAP. vey'd to us by *Inspiration* itself; and vice

I. *versa*, those which come by *Inspiration*,
 ~~~~~ have no *more* Evidence of their *coming from*  
*God*, than the other. For how should there  
 be any difference of *more* or *less*, where the  
*Evidence* is precisely the *same*? The Reader,  
 I believe, will be puzzled a little to com-  
 prehend this Doctrine, if he sticks to the  
*literal sense*; but he's to know, that how-  
 ever zealous and violent you appear for *li-*  
*teral senses* on some occasions, yet the *my-*  
*stical* and *figurative* is on others as great a  
 favourite with you, as with any *Christian*  
*Jew* of us all. Thus *coming from God*,  
 which at first sight one would take to be *re-*  
*veal'd supernaturally* by God, I suspect will  
 be found to mean no more with you than  
*Divine Truth*, and *Divine Truth* no more  
 than a Doctrine of *true Religion* or *Morality*.  
 And in this sense (but no other) it is true  
 enough, that Religious Truths discovered  
 by our natural faculties may *come from God*,  
 as well as those which are *reveal'd* to us  
 immediately by God. If I am ask'd now  
 for the key to this easy solution, we have  
 it, I think, conceal'd in more places than  
 one. In p. 85. *Divine Truth* is expressly  
 tantamount to *coming from God*. And in  
 the



the next, the Evidence of any Doctrines as CHAP.  
*coming from God* is drawn *solely* from the I.  
*Moral Reason and Fitness* of the Thing, and ~  
 is the *same* in all cases. If so, and no Evi-  
 dence *external* to the Doctrine is admitted,  
 then Doctrine *true and reasonable*, and Do-  
 ctrine *coming from God* are convertible terms,  
 of the same extent precisely, and of the  
 same signification. And hence it is, I sup-  
 pose, that in your Preface, *coming from God*  
 is made *equivalent* only to *making a part of*  
*true Religion*. For there you say, "The  
 "Moral Truth Reason and Fitness of Things  
 "is the only certain Mark of any Doctrine  
 "as *coming from God*, OR, making any part  
 "of true Religion. And for the same Rea-  
 son I presume in p. 10. you leave out *coming*  
*from God*, as *implied* in the *Moral Truth* of  
 a Religion. For there we have the same  
 observation as in p. 86. "In whichsoever  
 "of these ways &c. the Doctrines may be  
 "convey'd, the *Religion* is still the *same*,  
 "and *its Evidence* or Proof the same, name-  
 "ly, the Moral Truth, Reasonableness and  
 "Fitness of the Doctrines themselves. Where  
 the same *notion*, if I'm not much mistaken,  
 is design'd to be convey'd to the Reader, that  
 was given above, tho' here we have only in  
 general

CHAP. general *its Evidence*, that is I take it, of

I. being *true Religion*, i. e. *of coming from God*.  
 So that now by a little *decyphering* we may see, how you, *Philaethes*, can derive from God even *natural* discoveries of Moral Truth; and how dextrously you are like to evade those absurdities, which by taking your words in their *vulgar* and *natural* sense an unwary Reader might too hastily charge upon you. It is true, one would expect, that a *Moral Philosopher* would discourse with simplicity, clearness, and accuracy; and perhaps in an Age less *enlightned* than the present, the World might strongly insist upon it; but at this time of day, take but care to be thoroughly *unorthodox*, and you may deal with your Reader as you please; you may shuffle, equivocate, rattle, falsify, any thing, to banter the *Priests*, and demolish *Systems*, and still be caressed and applauded. Such therefore being the glorious liberties of the times, you are certainly right, *Philaethes*, not to lose your share; and if it is not *convenient* for you to be open and explicit, no doubt, to be dark and enigmatical, especially if a *Jewish* Opponent may be prettily ensnar'd by it, will pass for a pregnant instance both of Wisdom and Wit.

Wit. For the same reason we are not to CHAP.  
complain, if the same sort of *Cabbala* should I.  
lurk in the words, *Inspiration, Revelation* ~~~~~  
&c. which are things you often very grave-  
ly discourse of, as not only *possible*, but *pro-*  
*bable* too, and even very *useful* to Man-  
kind; but how we are to come by any  
*evidence* of it, is to me incomprehensible  
utterly upon your Hypothesis. Since ac-  
cording to that, the Evidence of a Doctrine  
*coming from God*, and the *Grounds and Rea-*  
*sons* of Belief are precisely the *same*, no more  
and no *less* in *this* way, than in the ordinary  
use of our rational faculties; which, I doubt,  
will be *none* at all in effect, if no *peculiar*  
proof, no clear superiority of light belongs  
to one above the other. For where then  
are the *Marks* to distinguish them? How  
can we be *ever* assur'd of an *extraordinary*  
Revelation either to ourselves or others, if it  
comes without any one *Sign* or *Character*  
of its being *such*? And how can we ever en-  
joy those excellent *uses* and *advantages* you  
talk of in any *Divine Revelation*, when you  
give us not so much as the *means* of disco-  
vering the Thing itself? I must own your  
way of stating the Evidence of Divine Truth  
looks extremely to me like an artful *oblique*  
*stroke*



CHAP. *stroke* at Revelation; and your frequent use

I. of that term should seem only as a decent  
 ~ cover to your new *Christianity*: But I will  
 not lay that to your charge directly, which  
*possibly* may be only a slip of your Pen; and  
 supposing you to allow, what you over and  
 over profess, I shall now go on to examine  
 your

2d MAXIM, by which your *Moral Truth*,  
*Reason*, and *Fitnes of Things* is made such  
 a *Criterion of Divine Truth*, that all Do-  
 ctrines which have not that character as  
 explain'd above, must be deem'd *not* to come  
 from God, nor any *part of true Religion*,  
 or *Matter of Conscience*. And here again  
 you give us a revival of *Christianity as old*  
 &c. which one would think any modest  
 Writer would either have declin'd, or at  
 least attempted to enforce by some new Ar-  
 guments, after so many solid confutations  
 of this Principle within these six years. But  
 tho' you only lay it down magisterially  
 without one tittle in answer to the late Op-  
 posers of it, or any one Argument of con-  
 sequence to support it, yet are we now, it  
 seems, to encounter it over again, as a mat-  
 ter of mighty importance, and likely to  
 confound our understandings, and ruin all  
 our

our *Systems* of Theology. But such is the CHAP. way of writing and repeating from one quar- I. ter; and as that is even pleasing at this time in *Theological* Matters, which would never be endur'd in the *Literary* or *Philosophical*, we must patiently submit to it, and attend as well as we can to the tedious rehearsal.

WHAT you now advance upon this head is so contrary to the *natural Relations* between God and Man, so inconsistent with the various states of Mankind, and so destitute of any real foundation, that I cannot help calling it an *Opprobrium* to *Human Reason*, and the present Age. It seems owing, like several other *Nostrums* prevailing amongst us, to a gross misapprehension, or misapplication of good old Principles. The language among Philosophers formerly was that, which Dr. *Clarke* has expressed in the following words. "A necessary *Mark* of "a Religion coming from God is, that the "duties it enjoyns be all such, as are agree- "able to our natural notions of God, and "perfective of the nature, and conducive to "the happiness of Men; and that the Do- "ctrines it teaches, be all such, as tho' not "indeed discoverable by the bare Light of "Nature, yet when discover'd by *Revela-*

CHAP. "tion, may be consistent with and agree-

I. "able to sound and unprejudic'd Reason (s).

W In this sense it is, that Dr. *Prideaux* calls the Religion of Nature and Reason the *Touchstone* of all Religion (t); and upon the same grounds our great *Stillingsfleet* lays it down as an incontestible maxim, that "whatever speaks a direct *Repugnancy* to "any of the fundamental dictates of Nature, "cannot be of Divine Revelation (u). And to the same purpose speak *Grotius* (w), *Cumberland* (x), Bp. *Williams* (y), Mr. *Locke* (z) and many others; and as they have stated the matter, all is right, and no reasonable Man would refuse to subscribe to it. But of late we are taught to the honour of *Britain* another lesson; and the *natural necessary Relations of Persons and Things* (and those only as known to us short-sighted Creatures) are made against all sense and reason such a Standard or Criterion of *Divine*

(s) *Clarke* Evidences &c. Prop. IX.

(t) *Prideaux*. Lett. to Deist, p. 169. Ed. 8th.

(u) *Stillingsfleet*. Orig. Sac. B. II. Ch. V. §. 6. Irenic. Part. I. Ch. 2. §. 1.

(w) *Grot.* J. B. & P. L. I. c. 1. §. x.

(x) *Cumberland*. Leg. Nat. p. 355. Prolegom. §. 27.

(y) *Williams*. Boyle Lect. Sermon III. & V. pass.

(z) *Locke*. Hum. Underst. B. IV. c. 18. §. v.

*Truth*



Truth, that no Doctrine or Precept, but CHAP. I.  
 what is founded in those Relations, and as  
 such has an *eternal Moral Reason and Fit-  
 ness in it*, can appear to us, or be safely re-  
 ceiv'd *as coming from God*, whatever Te-  
 stimony and Evidence it be otherwise at-  
 tended with. This now is the grand Posi-  
 tion, which is the *Cardo* of your whole Sy-  
 stem; and what I hope to disprove without  
 much difficulty. In order to which, I must  
 bestow a few words on the term Doc-  
 TRINE, that so often occurs upon this head.  
 'Tis well known, that *Doctrine* compre-  
 hends in itself the *credenda* as well as the  
*agenda* of Religion, that is, the *Objects* of  
*Belief* (either matters of Fact, or specula-  
 tive Truths) as well as *practical* Duties.  
 And of *all these* one would expect you to  
 give us a general *Criterion* in the *Moral*  
*Truth and Fitness of Things*, as that is to be  
 the *only Criterion of Divine Truth*, and the  
 sovereign preservative against delusion in *all*  
*Cases*. But how far the word *Doctrine* is  
 by you design'd to extend, is hard for a  
 Reader to judge; tho' 'tis obvious to every  
 one, that unless it takes in *all* parts of Re-  
 ligion, your *Criterion* is very defective at  
 first setting out, and will want a Companion

CHAP. to take part of its Office. Sometimes this

I. *Doctrines* is interpreted by *making a part of true Religion*. Pref. p. 8. Which character extends to the *speculative* as well as the *practical* parts of Religion; unless the *Attributes* of God are consider'd by you as *no* parts of *true Religion*. Again in p. 346. Your *Criterion* is expressly applied both to *Doctrines* and *Practise*, as including *both* in the Scheme. But sometimes again this *Doctrine* is what *we are oblig'd to comply with as a matter of Conscience* p. 86. Where the words *Complying* and *Conscience* import a Precept, the business of which is to govern *Actions*. Accordingly elsewhere you thus state the Question. "*Whether any rational proof can be given of a Command*" or *Law* from God, where the *Moral Reason* and *Fitness* of the Thing is not manifested to the Person. p. 90. As if the only *Doctrines* which you consider were *Commands* or *Laws*. And yet afterwards again, your *Moral Truth* and *Righteousness* would seem to comprehend the *Doctrines* concerning the *Being* and *Moral Perfections* of God, a *Resurrection from the Dead*, and a *Future State*. p. 345, 347, 348. Which surely are Things very different from *Laws* and *Commands*.

Commands. So that, as far as I can per- CHAP.  
ceive, we have Riddle and Mystery through- I.  
out; and the only effectual way to over-  
throw your Position, is to take it in all shapes,  
and disprove it in every one.

FIRST then I will shew, that your *Moral Truth* &c. from your *natural Relations* (as explain'd above) is no *Criterion* at all, nor possibly can be of *some Divine Doctrines*, namely those which are the objects of Belief. And 2d. That it is no *just* and *adequate* Criterion even of *practical Doctrines* as coming from God. As to the first: The case is so evident at first sight, that very few words upon it will suffice. The *Moral Truth* of one side, and the *Doctrines* here mention'd on the other are such dissimilar heterogeneous Things, and the methods of proving and the rules of judging of each are so widely different, that 'tis impossible for the former to be ever a true *Criterion* of the latter. *Moral Truth, Reason and Fitness* is no more than Truth, Reason and Fitness in *point of Morals*, and with reference to the *natural Law of Morality*, it bespeaks, as was shewn before, a *Duty* of the *practical* kind, to which, as Dr. Cudworth (a) expresses

(a) Cudworth of Morality. Ch. 2. p. 21.



CHAP. it, our Intellectual Nature obligeth of itself,  
 I. *perpetually and absolutely.* Now what has  
 this to do with Doctrines, which are out of  
 the sphere of *Morals*, and belong to *Truths*  
 of quite *another* class and kind? Suppose  
 for instance, these Doctrines relate to the  
*natural* Attributes of the Godhead, or to the  
*Counsels, Designs, and Works* of the Almighty,  
 or to any intermediate intellectual Be-  
 ings above us, or to the Future State of our  
 Souls and Bodies in another World. Where  
 is the Criterion of all these in your *Moral*  
*Reason and Fitness?* These are Points of  
*Knowledge and Theory*, not of *Moral Duty*  
 and *Practical Obedience*. And to make your  
*Moral Truth &c.* a Criterion of them or  
 others of the like nature, would be just as  
 wise and *fitting*, as to make *Civil Law* a  
 Criterion of *Astronomical Doctrines*, or *Rhe-*  
*toric of Geometry*, or a *Carpenter's Square*  
 of *Painting and Poetry*. And yet I suppose,  
 such *speculative Doctrines* may be proper  
 Subjects of a *Divine Revelation*, and useful  
 in the highest degree to an ignorant and  
 idolatrous World, whenever they shall real-  
 ly come from God himself. Now pray,  
*Philaethes*, inform us, how your *only cer-*  
*tain and infallible Criterion* will help us in  
 this

this case; how a steady adherence to that CHAP. Principle will have the excellent effect you I. ascribe to it, of *keeping Mankind clear in point of Religion, and preventing all difficulties and disputes upon that score?* p. 86.

It is true indeed, as the best Writers agree, that Human Reason at large is in *some* sense a Criterion or standard of such Doctrines, as all of them must be necessarily consistent and reconcileable with the *clear and true* Principles of it; otherwise they could not be admitted to our Belief as *coming from God*. Because what is not so, is inconsistent with that Light of Nature, and Measure of Knowledge, which God Almighty has already given us, to direct us in Religious as well as other concerns of Life. And our minds in such cases can never be so fully and certainly assur'd, that such Doctrines are *actually reveal'd* by God, as they are by the distinct perception of their own Ideas, that they are absolutely *false*. So that to yield our assent here, if it were possible, against the plainest dictates of our own Understandings, would in effect subvert the very Principles and Foundations of all Knowledge, Evidence and Assent whatsoever, and render our rational faculties entirely useless.

CHAP. But then to apply this, as it ought to be applied, the principles of Reason, by which the Doctrines abovemention'd are always to be tried, must be *clear and distinct*, as the Ideas of *intuitive Knowledge* or self-evident Axioms, or plain Demonstrations deduced regularly from them; not bare *Conjectures* and *Suspensions*, not faint *imperfect* Notions, or *probable* Opinions, arising from Custom, Education, Prejudices and the like; those having no sort of weight against *clear* Revelation, sufficiently prov'd by other Evidence. Because, as Mr. Locke very rightly states it, *where the Principles of Reason have not evidenc'd a Proposition to be certainly true or false, there clear Revelation, as another Principle of Truth, and Ground of Assent, may determine, and ought to determine our Assent (b)*, the greater Evidence in this case being justly allow'd to overballance the *less*. It is farther requisite, that the Doctrines of such pretended Revelation are directly *contrary to*, and *utterly inconsistent with* the clear Principles of Reason; otherwise, if they are only such, as lye *beyond and above* our Reason either to discover or comprehend, it is strictly demon-

(b) Locke. Hum. Underst. B. IV. Ch. XVIII. §. 9.  
strable



strable, that in that case no Objection will  
lye from *Reason* against them, and *Revela-*  
*tion* evinc'd by other mediums must carry it  
and command our obedience; as the same  
Mr. *Locke* (c) and Mr. *Boyle* (d), and Mr.  
*Norris* (e) have prov'd at large. With these  
limitations therefore *Reason* is allow'd to be  
a Judge and Guide, or if you please, a *Cri-*  
*terion* of *Divine Truth*. But even here 'tis  
not *moral* but *metaphysical* Truth in the  
Human Understanding, that is made a *Cri-*  
*terion* of these Doctrines; and that only in  
a *negative* way, as an *Index* of what is *false*,  
not as an absolute *Measure* of what is *true*.  
The former it *must* be, because we are as-  
sur'd from the goodness of God, who en-  
dued us with intellectual faculties, that the  
*clear* dictates of Reason are *true*, and what  
is *contrary* to them, is erroneous; but the  
latter it *cannot* be, because our faculties are  
*finite*, and our knowledge *imperfect*, and  
therefore incapable of comprehending *all*  
Truth by its own Powers, or of being ever  
commensurate with it. From hence then  
it is plain, that Doctrines which are not

(c) *Locke*. *ibid.* §. 7, 8.

(d) *Boyle*. *Reflections on a Theological Distinction* &c.

(e) *Norris*. *Account of Reason and Faith*. Ch. 3, 4, 5, 7.

*precep*

CHAP. *preceptive*, are exempted by their very nature from your tryal of their *Divine Authority* by the *Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of Things*.

LET us see now in the next place, whether those which are *practical* must all undergo that tryal universally, and by that alone be prov'd *Divine* or *coming from God*. Now I maintain, that even of these your *Moral Truth &c.* is no *just* and *adequate* Criterion. By *just* and *adequate*, I mean a *Criterion* in such a sense, that every precept from God in *all cases* and upon *all occasions* must be *entirely* and *positively* conformable to it; otherwise if it fail of this in any *part* or *respect*, we are not to receive it as *Divine* or a *matter of Conscience*. Now I say, that such a conformity as this to your *Moral Reason and Fitness* in all practical Doctrines, proposed to us as *coming from God*, cannot be requir'd without the greatest extravagance and presumption imaginable. For it goes upon various suppositions, every one of which, is palpably false and absurd. It must tacitly suppose and depend upon some or other of the following Articles. 1<sup>st</sup>. That nothing, but what is strict *Moral Duty* in itself, of *eternal* immutable obligation, by  
our

our Law of Nature, can ever have any CHAP. I.  
 Grounds and Reason for being the subject of a *Divine Command*, that is, in other words, that nothing, but what is *necessary* to be observ'd at all times, can be *proper* and *reasonable* to be done and enjoy'd at any time. 2d. That God, from whom all our *Rights* and *Liberties* are originally deriv'd, and by whose permission they continually subsist, can never *restrain* them in any one instance upon any occasion, but where our *Reason* sees the absolute *Fitness* of such a restraint, antecedent to his positive Will. 3d. That God can *determine* no *indifferent* Things by a Law, tho' Men may and do *determine* them perpetually. 4th. That all precepts from God must relate *solely* to Religion and Morality, and even in these to the very *Substance* and *Constituents* of both, not in the least to any *seasonable provisions* for the advancement and support of it in the World. 5th. That whatever be the *Moral* conduct and condition of Mankind in the several Ages of the World, and however *various* the Dispensations of Providence, yet the terms of acceptance with God, and the means to *Happiness* eternal must be still invariably the *same*.



CHAP. *same* from beginning to end, without one  
 I. *occasional* Institution, or one *positive* Pre-  
 cept extraordinary of Divine Appointment.  
 To which I suspect must be added, *6thly*.  
 That in judging of the *Moral Truth* and  
*Fitness* of Things, we are only to regard  
 those *Relations* of *Persons and Things* which  
 our *natural Reason* discovers (*f*) to us, tho'  
 the Author of that very Reason should add  
 ever so much to the light of it, by *reveal-*  
*ing* many new and illustrious *Relations* of  
*Persons and Things*, producing of course  
 new *Truths* and *Fitnesses* of Things, new  
 Subjects and Objects of Duty. Now if these  
 either in whole or in part are *not* the Prin-  
 ciples, upon which your *Criterion* of Di-  
 vine Truth is founded, let us know, *Phila-*  
*lethes*, upon what real Principles it is found-  
 ed. But if these are the true ones, they are  
 so big with Folly and Arrogance, and bear  
 such strong and glaring Characters of both,  
 that in my humble opinion that Man must  
 be a Prodigy of a *Moral Philosopher*, that  
 sincerely embraces and seriously espouses  
 them. And to make this evident, I will  
 point out several Cases, wherein it may be  
 undeniably *fit* and *expedient* for God Al-

(*f*) See *Mor. Philos.* p. 392, 393, 395.

mighty

mighty to interpose his particular Directions, and yet the Directions themselves either in *whole* or in *part*, in Substance or Circumstances, shall want that *Moral Reason and Fitness* so much talk'd of. I begin with those, where the *manner* and *circumstances* only of a Duty are such. In the Duties of Man relating to himself God may use his Authority to determine the *manner* and *circumstances* of them, in the way most agreeable to himself, and most useful to Men. As for instance; the *worship* of the Supreme Being *external* (g) as well as *internal* is in general a Duty founded in the *natural Relations of Persons and Things*, and is therefore in itself *morally fit and reasonable*, antecedent to any *positive Will or Law*; but 'tis thus *moral* and *necessary* only in the *general*, without precisely fixing the *Form*, or *Time*, or *Place*, in which we must perform it. Here by the *Law of Nature* a la-

(g) I am aware, that some Writers have doubted, whether an *external* Worship of God can be prov'd a *Moral Duty* by the Light of Nature. But I am fully perswaded, that it may, and entirely agree in that Point with Baron Pufendorf (Offic. Civ. & Hom. L. I. c. 4. §. 6, 7.) Dr. Sherlock (Relig. Assemb. Part 1. Ch. 2. Part 2. Ch. 2.) and Mr. Wollaston (Relig. of Nat. Sect. V. p. 120. &c.) whom the Reader may consult for entire satisfaction.

titude

CHAP. titude and variety may be admitted, there  
 I. being no *one Form*, or *Time*, or *Place*, which  
 is *morally necessary*, antecedent to positive  
 Will; and yet since all these must be *deter-*  
*min'd* in one way or other for the sake of  
*Order* and *Decency*, whenever *Publick Wor-*  
*ship* is perform'd, the Almighty may sure-  
 ly *determine* them *himself* if he pleases, by a  
 particular command; and by so doing would  
 help our infirmities, and remove many un-  
 easy doubts and perplexities arising about  
 it; in which case, those Men would have  
 a sorry excuse to plead for themselves, who  
 would not be prevail'd with to receive any  
 such command as *coming from God*, only be-  
 cause to *their apprehensions* it wanted a *Mo-*  
*ral Fitness and Necessity* in the nature of  
 Things, as discover'd to Human Understand-  
 ings by the light of Reason alone. Thus to  
 be a little more particular, may God ex-  
 pressly require a certain *portion* of our Time  
 to be spent in his Service or Religious Ex-  
 ercises, and certain *Days* or *Seasons* to be  
 set apart for that purpose; and he may al-  
 so appoint certain Rites and Ceremonies to  
 be used in his Publick Worship, and  
 certain Ministers to officiate and preside in  
 it; and likewise what *kind* of Service shall  
 be



be paid to him, whether purely *Spiritual*, CHAP.  
consisting of Prayers, Praises, and Thank- I.  
givings, or joyn'd with some *material* Of-  
ferings, according to the different States and  
Circumstances of Mankind. All these and

many other things in *Religion* may the So-  
vereign Lord of the Universe prescribe upon  
various occasions; and that for the signal  
benefit, ease, and satisfaction of his Crea-  
tures; it being acknowledg'd by the wisest  
Philosophers (*b*) *antient* and *modern*, that  
Human Reason stood in great need of some  
particular Direction from above on this  
head, and without it would have been puz-  
zled and distracted with endless difficulties.

BUT farther 2d. Other Precepts may  
come from God, which in the *whole ma-*  
*terial* part of them neither have, nor can  
have such a *Moral Reason and Fitness*, as  
you contend for. I take it for granted, that

(*b*) That eminent Civillian Mr. Thomas concludes his  
Reflections upon this subject with the following words. *Vides*  
*adeo, quam maxime ratio nostra in Officio Hominis nobilissimo*  
*cautiat, & in quantum Lumen Natura sine Lumine Revela-*  
*tionis caligine sit obductum. Atque ita simul intelligis, cur*  
*in precepto Officium Hominis in hac parte dirigente addiderim,*  
*Deum colendum esse, secundum modum ab ipso revelatum.*  
Jurisprud. Divin. L. II. c. 1. §. 26.

Comp. Dr. Clarke. Evidences. &c. p. 176. — 181. Ed. 5.

God

CHAP. God might lay any injunctions upon us

I. which have a real *tendency* to *promote* the  
 ~~~~~ Piety and Virtue of Mankind, tho' they do  
 not contain the very *Essence* or *Substance* of
 it. Because in these he would act for an
End, the most desirable to us, and most be-
 coming his infinite Goodness, the *Perfection*
 and *Happiness* of Man. Now the proper
 subjects of such injunctions as these, are
 Things not *morally* good and *necessary* of
themselves, not strict and immutable Duties
 by the Law of Nature, but good *instrumen-*
tally, as *means* exceedingly useful toward va-
 luable *Ends*, and made so either by the *ge-*
neral condition or *particular* circumstances
 of Men. For it is too notorious, and con-
 firm'd by the experience of all Ages, that
 the *Practise* of true Religion and Virtue in
 the World depends upon other Rules, besides
 those which shew the absolute *Nature*, and
 command the *Realities* of it: There is a
Discipline requisite to mould and form our
 distemper'd Constitution to a *Moral Recti-*
tude; there must be *Remedies* applied to
 our Infirmities and Corruptions, and *Re-*
straints to the Violence of Appetites and
 Passions; *Impediments* both without and
 within us must be carefully remov'd, and
 ensnar-

ensnaring temptations of various kinds in-
 dustriously guarded against, to make way
 for the reception of higher Principles, to
 give 'em weight and influence upon the
 Hearts and Lives of Men, and to nurture
 up the seeds of Goodness to full maturity
 and perfection. For this purpose, He who
 knoweth unerringly what is in Man, and
 what at all times is most needful and con-
 venient for us in a *Spiritual* as well as *Tem-
 poral* view, may certainly, if he pleases, do
 for us, what in prudence we should endea-
 vour to do for ourselves, that is, provide
 by some wholesome *Regimen*, against our
 manifold weaknesses and disorders, against
 the various wiles and snares lying round a-
 bout us, and *train us up like Children in the
 way we should go*, and lead us with his own
 hand to *Holiness* and *Happiness*. This, I
 hope, would be esteem'd by all Men in their
 wits, a most kind and beneficent condescen-
 sion in the Supreme Being to his Creatures,
 and a seasonable assistance to those, who
 cannot possibly be so *wise* for their own Se-
 curity and Salvation, as the Fountain of
 Wisdom itself. Now if this be true, if God
 may thus at *any time* and in *any degree* pre-
 scribe such a *Regimen* to his People, he may

CHAP.

I.



D

both

CHAP. both *enjoyn* and *forbid* several things, which
 I are only *ministerially* good, and *occasionally*
 useful, not *eternally* and *unalterably* necessary in themselves. It may be here, as it is in all Human Discipline, for the Education of Children and Institution of Youth; the Rules, by which their manners are form'd, are not contracted within *lawful* and *unlawful*, necessary and unnecessary; those alone being very insufficient Barriers against Vice and Error, without other subsidiary regulations of their Conduct, by which their actions are confin'd to much narrower bounds, circumscrib'd in the use and number even of *lawful* Gratifications, to stop the very avenues and inlets to corruption. Thus also may our Heavenly Father deal with his Children; he may give them such Orders and Statutes as he knows are most suitable to their temper and condition, the most likely means of *implanting* the best Principles, of raising and confirming good *Dispositions*, and producing vigorous *moral* Habits, by which they may be fix'd in a steady course of true Religion, and preserv'd from that vitious Leaven, to which Custom, Education, or the Example of others might allure them. Or if he

sees



sees them already gone astray and corrupted, he may then like a good Physician prescribe such Medicinal *Restoratives*, as tho' perhaps neither absolutely necessary as the *only* Cures, nor of any use at all in *perfect Health*, are yet as *good* at least or *better* than any others, and to Persons in that *sickly* state extremely *proper* and *desireable*. Suppose for instance, in an Age when the grossest Idolatry and Superstition were reigning in the World, God Almighty should be pleased to make an extraordinary manifestation of his Will to a certain People, who should be raised up for a Light to an ignorant and wicked World, to bear witness against the Errors and Impurities of the Nations round about them, and to keep up a due *sense* and Religious Worship of the only true God. Now in order to *reform* and *secure* this People from the Vanities and Vices, to which they were addicted very strongly before, and afterwards continually exposed, would any method be more proper and effectual, than to give them a new System of Laws, prescribing such a *form* of Religion, with such Rites and Observances, as would best suit the temper and state of those Times, and be most *affecting* and *engaging* to that

CHAP. People; and forbidding *expressly* such practices and usages, as were most obnoxious in the other Nations, and of the most malignant influence upon true Religion? I hardly believe any rational Man would deny this, when the *use* and *importance* of such a method is so very apparent; and yet 'tis very plain, that many of these *Commands* and *Prohibitions* would be founded not on *Nature* so far as our views of it extend, but rather on *Accident* as we should call it; not containing the *Constituents* of true Religion, but the *Instruments auxiliary* to it and *productive* of it, not *necessary* in themselves and eternally *unchangeable*, but in *that case* of excellent *Service*, and made *obligatory* therefore in their *Season*.

IT would be endless to give particular instances of such Prescriptions in all supposable cases, and needless indeed to Men of thought and penetration; since the very Idea of the different *states* of Mankind above-mention'd will suggest variety of matter for *new* Precepts *negative* and *affirmative*, either to eradicate prevailing ill Practices, or establish better in their room. To which may be added *symbolical* Observances, instituted either as Pledges of *future* Blessings

sings, or Memorials of *past*, and design'd to CHAP.
excite in Mens minds a constant and serious I.
sense of their many *Obligations* to Duty, 
and the danger of Disobedience, under such
engaging encouragements on one side, and
such impending *Terrors of the Lord* on the
other. This no doubt was the ground and
occasion of many Precepts in the Jewish
Law, and rendred them *wise*, and extreme-
ly *fit* and valuable in those particular Times
and Circumstances, and therefore very wor-
thy of Divine Goodness and Authority;
which Precepts as I may consider more di-
stinctly hereafter, I do but just mention in
this place, and go on to another subject.

3d. BESIDES these Laws, which are
grounded on *moral* Reasons, and *visibly*
conducive to *moral Ends*, I shall now sub-
joyn some others, wherein even a pure *in-*
differency to our apprehensions cannot *alone*,
supposing other Evidence of their coming
from God, be a sufficient reason for reject-
ing them. Because since God has an abso-
lute Authority over us, and from thence an
unquestionable *Right* to command our O-
bedience in any instance that he pleases, *con-*
sistent with his own Attributes and Laws of
Nature, and since infinite *Wisdom* may act

CHAP. in these Cases upon *Reasons* unknown to us,

I.  and without any obligation to discover them, it is impossible for us to prove *a priori*, that Precepts concerning such *indifferent* things either cannot or do not proceed from him. For how in truth should we do it? Will any Man pretend to demonstrate, how far precisely the supreme Governor of the World will exert his Authority over us? That he will *never* restrain our *Liberty* in Things, in which *we* often by our own *private* Wills restrain ourselves, or *Human* Laws and Institutions are allow'd to do it? That he *never* will impose such Commands merely for the tryal and exercise of our Obedience, to teach us Humility, and an absolute submission to *his Will*, and to exact a sort of *Personal* Homage, an implicit Devotion to the Lord of Lords? I will venture to say, that 'tis impossible for us to demonstrate these things, and we must both forget ourselves and him too, if we attempt it. For if a perfect resignation to the *Will* of God be a *Virtue* in his rational Creatures, as it certainly is, what should hinder *some* particular instance being given by God, wherein *that single Virtue* may be tried, and most eminently distinguish'd? And where can

(i) Dr.
to Christ
of Christia

can it be tried more effectually, and shine out with brighter Lustre, than in a ready Compliance with commands of God, to which nothing but *his* Will and Authority could oblige us? By such an act of Obedience, his Sovereignty over us is most signally acknowledg'd, and the deepest Sense express'd by his Servants of their entire Dependence upon him, and Subjection to Him, For which reason alone, were there no other, it is generally confess'd with due Modesty, that *divine* Commands of this seemingly indifferent kind are *probable a priori*, and reasonably expected from God. And if so, the bare Want of your *Moral Truth* is no cogent argument against their coming from God. I am very well aware of the late Objections on this head from *Christianity as old*, &c. and if you had thought fit to repeat 'em, might have taken the trouble to consider them distinctly. But that Employment may be spar'd me, when others (i) have so lately and so fully discuss'd that point already, and you, *Philaethes*, have nothing to urge against them, but a Dread of some

(i) Dr. Conybeare. Def. Rev. Rel. ch. 3. Leland. Answer to *Christian. as old*. Vol. 1. ch. 4. Foster. Usefulness, &c. of *Christian Rev.* ch. 4.

CHAP. terrible consequences, of which I shall endeavour to ease you in the Sequel. But
 I. further,

4th. If your *Catholic Criterion* has so little Authority in the Cases abovemention'd, it will certainly have much less in those which follow. For suppose any *new Relations of Persons and Things*, unknown to the Light of Nature, should be ever reveal'd by God in a *Supernatural Way*, and *new Obligations and Duties* should arise from *them* upon Mankind, what will become of your *Moral Truth &c.* in that extraordinary Instance? That such *Relations* are possible; I suppose, no wise or modest Man will deny; and that God may discover many Truths to Men, which their *Rational Faculties* could never teach them, I suppose to be likewise indisputable; and that certain Means there are of knowing, when God does really vouchsafe such extraordinary Communications to Mankind, shall be shewn hereafter. Now suppose only such *Relations* to be once made known, there will then appear of course resulting from *them* certain *Fitnesses* of Things and Actions, as well as from any known Relations whatever. And if Men are immediately
 and

and deeply concern'd in them, their Beha-
viour and Duty will of course be affected
by them, and their *moral* Rule must be
suited to them. For as a late ingenious
Writer has justly observ'd, the "*Way* in
"which these Relations are made known,
"whether by Reason or Revelation makes
"no Alteration in the Case; because the
"Duties arise out of the *Relations them-*
"*selves*, not out of the *Manner*, in which
"we are inform'd of them (*k*). Thus for
instance, if *Revelation* should disclose to us
a wonderful Scheme of Providence, carried
on by two *divine* Persons in Conjunction
with the *Father*, for the Recovery and Sal-
vation of Mankind, represented by that
Revelation in a State of Ruin: In which
Scheme the one bears the peculiar Office of
Mediator, and the other of our *Guide* and
Sanctifyer: These respective Offices of those
two *divine* Persons, and their Relations to
us once clearly discover'd, will *directly* pro-
duce *new* Obligations of Duty upon us;
and the grand Transaction itself conducted
by them, will be a necessary Foundation
for *new* divine Precepts. This in general
is as evident to Reason, admitting only the

(*k*) Dr. Butler. Analogy &c. Pt. 11. ch. 2. p. 222.

Truth

CHAP. Truth of the Case, as that *Moral Duties*

I. arise from the *natural* and *visible* Relations between God and Man, or between Man and Man. But now I ask, how your *Moral Reason &c.* will intrude itself here? How that can be set up for a just *Criterion* of *Divine* Truth in *Supernatural* Affairs? Your *Moral Truth &c.* will extend no further than the *Moral Law* of Nature, on which it is founded, and to which it refers; and that *Moral Law* considers no other *Relations*, but those which are discover'd by the *Light of Nature*, and the *eternal immutable Principles* of it are adapted solely to that Measure of Light: Hitherto they carry us, but no farther; and your *Moral Truth &c.* must likewise be restrain'd within the same bounds. Here it leaves us, and we must e'en look out for a *new Criterion* in the present Case. Indeed when the Existence of such *Divine* Persons, and their Proceedings with respect to Man are reveal'd, *Human Reason* will discern a *fitness* of *some* Religious Regards to those Persons, such as Honour, Worship, Love, Trust, and Hope. But if it offers to prescribe the *whole* of what is necessary to be done in this grand Affair, and to fix the *Terms*, upon which the

the Salvation procur'd *conditionally* for us, shall and must be obtain'd by Men, it swells then into a vain Self-sufficiency, and may prove very fatal in the End to the giddy Idolizers of it. No one indeed but an arrant *Vaninus* in conceit and Presumption could bear the very Thought, that the blind obnoxious *Sinner* himself must be absolute Judge, and ought to determine precisely, what Method of Atonement, what terms of Reconciliation, what Means of Grace, and what Degrees and Conditions of future Happiness, it is *fit* and *proper* for the Lord and Judge of all Men to decree; so that any Doctrines upon this head, which do not exactly agree with *his* Schemes of Salvation, must be deem'd of no *divine* Authority, tho' all the *external* Evidence in the World appear'd in support of them. But I would hope, *Philaethes*, that *your* Sentiments are more humble and moderate, and that *Moral Truth Reason and Fitness* have not so engross'd your Thoughts and even turn'd your Head, as to inspire you with such extravagant Flights of Arrogance and Profaneness. But to conclude,

The last Instance in which your *Criterion* must fail us, is in *Precepts or Laws* of God

CHAP. God which have no *relation* in themselves to *Religion* and *Morality*. And those are of a *Civil* Nature, relating to *Civil* Society, and enacted purely for *Temporal* uses. For what should exclude the King of Kings from directing at any time in *secular* Affairs if he pleases, and from setting himself up at the Head of a State, and assuming a *Legislative* Authority over it? Why may not He in some primitive Age of the World take a certain People under his immediate Protection and Government, and establish a Body of *Civil* Laws for the present Benefit of that particular Nation, and for a noble Exemplar of political Wisdom to other Communities, and to manifest his own Superior Power and Authority over all the *tutelar* Gods of other Nations? Surely that Being who form'd us for political Society, and made so many Temporal Blessings the Fruits of it, might add to those Blessings, if he thought fit, by putting the Administration of it in some Instance under infinite *Wisdom*, and *Power*, and *Goodness*, from whence many useful Lessons and Effects might be deriv'd to Mankind in *general*, as well as singular Benefits and Advantages to his own immediate Subjects in particular.

And

And of this too, with your Leave we shall CHAP.
consider the *Jewish* Polity as an eminent I.
Instance in fact; to the Laws of which State
the Codes of *Athens* and *Rome* and other
Kingdoms owe a great deal more I am sure,
than the Generality of Men are aware of.
But now if the very Hypothesis of such a
divine Legislature be neither impossible in
Theory, nor without Confirmation by *Fact*,
how is your *Moral Fitness* &c. a *Criterion*
of such sort of Laws, as *coming from God*?
Must every *Civil* precept from Him be
founded in the *natural* Relations of Persons
and Things, antecedent to any *positive* Will,
and eternally *unalterable* as those Relations
themselves? Pray apply it to *Human* Laws
of the same kind, and then every Man of
common Sense will perceive the Absurdity
and mischievous Effects of it. For let it
once be admitted, and it cancels directly all
National Laws, and in consequence of that
dissolves the very Frame, and defeats the
primary Ends of all Civil Government.

FROM what has been said then, I hope
the two Propositions, which I first under-
took to make out, are now pretty plain and
sufficiently establish'd, viz. That your
Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness of things,

CHAP.

I

is neither an infallible Mark of any Doctrines as coming from God, nor any just and adequate Criterion of such Doctrines. All that remains, is only to obviate in a few Words, some little surmises of yours and Apprehensions of dismal Effects, that might follow, if Men are so hardy, as not to be govern'd by your kind Advice.

You often cry out with great Concern and Emotion, that unless Mankind will steadily adhere to this Principle and Criterion of yours, their Understandings and Consciences must be continually under the Influence and Directions of Enthusiasts and Impostors. That we cannot quit this and trust to any thing else, without exposing ourselves to all the Delusion and Imposture in the World. That if this be not allow'd, there can be no true and certain marks and bounds of Religion, but the grossest Errors and most Diabolical Delusions might be receiv'd as Divine Truths. p. 10, 86, 88, 346. Good Philalethes, take courage, and never frighten yourself and others with such imaginary Monsters and Bugbears. If indeed we could not quit this Principle of yours, but we must presently renounce our Reason and Senses, and swallow every fiction implicitly, that
a' con-

a cunning designing Knave or Fanatical Enthusiast would impose upon us, there might be some Danger, and Ground for such a *Panic*. But the Case is quite otherwise; we may still be *wise* and *cautious*, and guarded sufficiently, if we please, against these *Diabolical Delusions*, tho' we take not your *Moral Reason and Fitness* &c. for our *certain and infallible Guide in Divine Truth*. We have other *Criteria*, other *Marks* and *Evidences*, by which we may judge with great certainty of Divine Revelation and Authority in Doctrines, tho' your's are set aside as exceedingly incompetent and fallacious. We are not to believe every idle Pretender upon *his* bare Word, but may require the *Proofs* and *Credentials* of his Mission from God; and if we are not wanting to ourselves in *Knowledge* and *Diligence*, (without *which* even your grand Preservative will signify nothing) I will venture to assert, that by them we may discern Truth from Error and Realities from Fiction with more clearness abundantly, than any other matter of Fact ever *was* or *can* be prov'd by any Authority whatever. As to fixing the *certain Marks and Bounds of Religion* in such a manner, as to keep Mankind always
clear

CHAP. clear in point of Religion; and prevent all Errors and Corruptions of the World; it is a thing *impracticable* in itself, considering the Carelessness, Weakness, Inattention, Ignorance, and Education of the Generality; and even your *Moral Reason* &c. (whatever Beauties and Virtues you conceive of it in *Theory*) would prove in the Experiment, when every Man applies it for himself, a mere *Lesbian Rule*, and that very *Nose of Wax*, with which you afterwards compliment the Scripture. It would be ever changing, and turning; and moulded into numberless forms, according to the various Apprehensions, Capacities, and Notions of those who make use of it. And till you can discover some new *Specific* to make Men *infallible* and *impeccable*, a perfect cure of all distempers in the Mind, is as mere a *Chimera* as one of those in the Body. Therefore all that is *possible* to be done, and reasonable to be expected, is to find out those *Means*, which with *Care*, *Attention*, and *good Sense* will safely conduct us to the *End* we aim at. And what those are in the present Case, by which we may try every *Prophet*; and be secur'd sufficiently

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ficiently against Deception, will next be set forth in the following Chapters.

CHAP.
II.



C H A P. II.

Shewing, The proper Evidence of divine Revelation in general, and the Use of Miracles and Prophecy in that View.

IT being prov'd in the pages preceeding, that 'tis in vain to fix the Marks of Doctrines coming *properly* from God, in the *Moral internal* Nature of the things themselves; we must look for these Marks and Evidences, if any such can be given, in something *external* and *distinct* from the Doctrine itself, manifesting an extraordinary interposition of God, and his plain *Testimony* to the Truth of what is alledged. I speak here chiefly of that sort of *divine* Revelation, which is usually call'd *Mediate*, where God Almighty does not communicate his Pleasure to us directly himself, but by other Men acting in his Name, and pretending a divine Commission from Him to that End. As to *immediate* or Inspiration, the Evidence of that to the Person inspir'd will be those strong Impressions and bright

E Illumi-

CHAP. Illuminations of his Mind, by which, no

II. doubt, the *God of the Spirits* of all Flesh
 can work as effectually upon the Spirits and
 Minds of Men, and yield as clear Manifestations and as forcible Convictions of his own Presence and Operation, as he can of his own Action and Power upon our Bodies, or any *Material* part of the visible World.
 " That God can accompany his own Revelation with such a clear and overpowering
 " Light, as shall discover to us the Divinity of them, and satisfy us beyond all
 " doubt and scruple, I think no Man can
 " doubt, says a great Prelate (*1*), that considers the vast Power and Influence, which
 " *He* must needs have over our Understandings, who made them, and knows the
 " Frame of them. And if this be granted,
 " it is not necessary to explain the particular
 " way how it is done, it being a thing not
 " to be express'd in words, but to be felt
 " and experienc'd. So that the Argument
 " by which this persuasion of a divine Revelation is wrought in those that have it,
 " is inward Experience of that full Satisfaction and Assurance, which they find to

(1) *Tillotson*. Vol. III. Sermon. 167. Comp. *Jenkin*. Reasonableness of Christianity. Vol. 2. ch. 2.

“be *supernaturally* wrought in them, that
 “is, of which they can give no Account
 “from themselves. And a good Man re-
 “flecting upon himself, and this Assurance
 “that he finds in himself, may be able to
 “give himself a rational Account of it, and
 “satisfy himself, that it is not a *stubborn*
 “*belief* and an *obstinate Conceit* of things
 “without any ground or reason. Thus he
 “finds it is a *foreign* Impression, and doth
 “not spring from himself, nor hath it’s rise
 “from thence; therefore he ascribes it to
 “some Spirit without himself; and he be-
 “lieves there is a God, that *can* and proba-
 “bly *doth* communicate himself to the
 “Minds and Spirits of Men; and that his
 “Goodness is such, that he will not suffer
 “good Men, who do heartily and sincerely
 “desire to know his Will; to be under a
 “*Necessity* of Delusion (which they unavoid-
 “ably are, if they may then be deceiv’d,
 “when they have the greatest Assurance, and
 “clearest Satisfaction, that such a thing is
 “reveal’d to them of God) and from thence
 “he reasonably concludes, that he ought
 “not to question the matter any farther.
 And of this, *Philaethes*, there should be no
 dispute at present between you and me, since

CHAP. in *Words* at least you *suppose* it all along, and

II. allow the reality of it; and what is more,
 ~ contend even for the eminent *use* and *necessi-*
ty of it to Mankind. Thus say you, "If
 " God speaks to me *immediately* and *direct-*
ly, I believe him upon his *own Authority*,
 " without any *Human Interpositions*. p. 84.
 Where let me observe by the way, if in this
 Case, which in effect is the same with *In-*
spiration, you would believe God upon his
own Authority, you would not, I think,
 build your faith *solely* upon the *moral reason*
and fitness of the thing; since to my apprehension it is a flat Contradiction to believe
 God upon his *own Authority*, and at the
 same time to believe him *only* upon the *mo-*
ral fitness of the thing, *i. e.* not at all upon
his Authority, but something else. Again,
 " The Doctrines and Obligations of moral
 " Truth and Righteousness may be convey'd
 " to the Mind --- by *Inspiration*, or imme-
 " diate personal *Revelation* from God. p. 5.
 " 86. And in p. 82. (without strange
finesse and chicanery) you must tacitly sup-
 pose a peculiar *Certainty* convey'd to a Man's
Mind by Inspiration or *immediate Revelati-*
on, and that *the Knowledge of any Truth* is
convey'd to Persons thus inspir'd as a Matter
 of

of divine Faith. And lastly in p. 144. CHAP. II.
 You expressly oppose *Revelation* to *Reason*,
 as a new *Light* superadded by God to the
 other, and of excellent Use to Mankind in
 the discovery even of *Moral Truths*; a just
 and grateful Sense of which you endeavour
 very commendably to raise in those *conceited*
 Gentlemen who want it. So that to all *ap-*
pearance we are perfectly agreed in this first
 point, both as to the thing itself, and the
 particular Evidence of Divinity attending it.

BUT the other or *Mediate* is the divine
 Revelation which you cannot digest by any
 means, and the strongest Evidence that can
 ever be produc'd for it, *Miracles* and *Pro-*
phesy, you treat with much disdain and
 Ridicule. They are all delusive and tri-
 fling with you, affording no rational Grounds
 of Assent, and no clear discriminations of
 Truth from falshood, To begin with Mi-
 racles. You tell us, that "They *alone* con-
 sider'd can prove nothing at all, and
 ought to have no weight or influence with
 any body. Nay not only *alone consider'd*
 are they so insignificant, but "They *never*
 can be taken for the proper Evidence, or
 Proof of the Doctrines themselves. "And
 that it would not, as you conceive, so

CHAP. " much as justify you in receiving any Doc-
 II. " trine as from God, and resting your eter-
 ~ " nal Salvation upon it, that *Miracles* had
 " been wrought for the proof of it in for-
 " mer Ages. p. 98, 99, 345. Here, *Phila-*
lethes, I presume you talk in your *Deistical*
 Capacity, putting off the *Christian* for a
 while; this being the constant Language of
 all your renowned Predecessors in *Christian-*
Deism, the *Blounts*, *Tindals*, *Shaftesburys*,
Woolstons &c. who had all, it seems, too
 much *Wit* to have Faith in *Miracles*, and
 hugg'd with excessive Delight that old smart
 saying among the *Greeks*, *Θαύματα μᾶλλον*,
Miracles are for *Fools*. But let us see what
 you offer in defence of this Doctrine. The
 Sum and Substance, as far as I can find, of
 all that you object, is this. " That there
 " can be no Connection between the Power
 " of working *Miracles*, and the Truth of
 " the Doctrines taught by the *Miracle-wor-*
kers. That false Prophets, the most
 " wicked Seducers, and the Devil himself
 " may work *Miracles*. p. 98. So much in
general concerning *Miracles*; the whole of
 which is only a formal Repetition of an old
 trite Story rais'd and confuted a hundred
 times over, with little else but ambiguity
 and

and artifice to support it. But to enforce CHAP.
this Observation you urge a pretended Mat- II.
ter of fact, " That the extraordinary Powers
" and Gifts in the Apostolick Age were ne-
" ver confin'd or annex'd to any Moral Cha-
" racter, but the *false* Prophets and Tea-
" chers had them *as well* as the true. That
" the Persons vested with those Gifts and
" Powers were neither *infallible* nor *impec-*
" cable, not made incapable either of being
" *deceiv'd* themselves, or of *deceiving* others.
" p. 9, 81. As to the particular Gifts and
Powers of the Apostolick Age, I shall con-
sider them distinctly in another place; at
present, the Case of Miracles in general is
what I proceed to examine. And in order
to prevent Mistakes and Confusion upon
this head, I must first explain the Nature,
and define the meaning of the word *Miracle*.
It is evidently a *relative* Term, and capable
of different Senses according to the diffe-
rent Views and Lights in which it is con-
sider'd, and the different Relations which
in our Ideas it may secretly bear to other
things. And this, I imagine, is the true
Reason, why so many writers disagree in
their Account and Description of a Miracle,
and every one almost is liable to some Degree

CHAP. of Blame and Exception. Not so much

II.  from any great Obscurity or Difficulty in the Thing itself, as because their Conceptions and Representations of it were only *partial*; each writer endeavouring to reduce to *one* particular *Form* and *Kind*, that which really is various in *Specie*, like any other thing which admits of *Sorts* or *Degrees*. Thus if you define a Miracle according to the bare *Etymology* of the word, by the *manner* in which it *affects* a Spectator, and the *apparent* Nature of it to *his* Apprehension, we may call it with Mr. Locke, *A sensible Operation which being above the Comprehension of a Spectator, and in his Opinion contrary to the establish'd Course of Nature, is taken by Him to be divine (m)*. This is the lowest Notion of a *Miracle*, and it must be confess'd, very much expos'd to the late severe Censure (n) bestow'd upon it, and of little Use in our present Enquiry. But if we rise a step higher, and would only express, what it *really* should be in *itself*, to become *properly* and *truly* a *Miracle* to *us*, we may term it, *an unusual and sensible Effect, most evidently either in the Matter*

(m) Lock. Discourse of Mirac. Vol. 3. p. 451. Fol.

(n) See Mr. Gbandler. Of Mirac. ch. 1. p. 7-11.

(o) Cu
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495. fol.
(s) Le Cl
credulity

or Manner of it above the Power of all natural material Causes, and the Art of Man to produce. I add *Material*, because some late Writers have extended the Sense of *natural Causes*, beyond the old and common signification of them, to include *all intelligent Agents* under God, as well as *Man* and *material Causes*. I add also *in the Manner* as well as the *Matter*, because some Effects may be truly *Miraculous* as to the former, without being so as to the latter. For instance, when a Disease, that is *curable* in itself by Time and medicinal Applications, is *instantly* heal'd without the Use of any such Means, by the bare Utterance of a word, or the touch of a garment &c. But *Miraculous* it is in the *Matter*, when the Thing effected is such in *itself*; as the raising the Dead to Life, giving Sight to a Man born blind &c. And in this Definition of a *simple* Miracle concur the great *Cudworth* (o), *Episcopius* (p), *Tillotson* (q), *Mosheim* (r), and *Le Clerc* (s); with whom

(o) *Cudworth*. Syft. Intell. Sect. 1. ch. v. §. 85. (p) *Episcop.* Institut. L. iv. cap. 13. (q) *Tillots.* Vol. II. Sermon. 175. p. m. 495. fol. (r) *Mosheim*. Annot. in *Cudw.* ub. sup. §. 86. (s) *Le Clerc*. Lett. 2. §. 2, 4, 5. added to his Caus. of Incredulity. *Id.* Pneumatolog. Sect. 3. cap. 8.

CHAP. agree in Sense, tho' not exactly in terms, Dr.

II. *Clarke* (u), *Bp. Leng* (x), and many others.
 Farther 3d. If we insert into our Notion of a Miracle it's Theological Use and Significancy, as a *Divine Testimonial to Persons and Doctrines*, we must then to the Character of it given above add that, of being the *special Work of God, in Attestation to the Truth of some particular Doctrine, and to the divine Commission of some particular Person*. In this View it is, that *Bp. Kidder* (y), *Witfus* (z), *Werenfelsus* (a), and *Dr. Rogers* (b) consider and define a Miracle. Again 4th. If we would intimate in the very Definition the suppos'd Means of discerning such divine Miracles, by the Nature of the works themselves, we may add another circumstance in them, that of *crossing and interrupting the known Laws and establish'd Course of Nature*. Which Quality is therefore express'd, as 'tis certainly implied in the highest kind of Miracles, by the Learned *Stillingfleet* (c)

(u) *Clarke*. Evidences of Nat. and Rev. Relig. p. 311. Ed. 5. (x) *Leng*. Boyle Lect. Sermon. 13. p. m. 389, 390, 396. (y) *Kidder*. Demonst. of the Messiah. Pt. 1. ch. 5. p. 42, 49, 51, fol. (z) *Wits*. Meletemat. Leidens. Dissert. 5. (a) *Werenfels*. Oper. Dissert. 5. Ed. Bas. 1718. (b) *Rogers*. Sermon. 6. Vol. 1. (c) *Stillingfleet*. Orig. Sac. B. 2. ch. 9. p. 170. fol.

Turretine (d), Fleetwood (e), and Mr. Bud-
deus (f); not to mention other eminent writ-
ters still living.

CHAP.
II.
W

Now by thus distinguishing the several Ideas, which in the Minds of different writers might form their Notion of a Miracle, we may both account for the great variety of Expressions upon this Subject, and easily, I think, reconcile the Sentiments of most Learned Men concerning it. I do not say *all*, for there are certainly two classes of Men, who never can agree in their Principles either with one another, or the writers of the three latter Divisions, namely those of Mr. Locke's Opinion, and those still behind, who will allow *no* Effect to be properly a *Miracle*, but what requires an *infinite* Power to produce it. I shall not enlarge here in Remarks on these different hypotheses, but for my own Part chuse the second Definition of those abovemention'd, as that which both excludes all the *false* imaginary Miracles, and comprehends all the species of those which are *true*. These few things being premis'd, let us now hear,

(d) Alphons. Turretin. Oper. Tom. 2. Dissert. 7. p. 174.

(e) Fleetwood. Essay on Miracles. p. 2. 2vo. (f) Buddei. Thes. de Atheismo &c. cap. 3. §. 5.

Philaethes,

CHAP. *Philaetbes*, what you have advanc'd against

II. Miracles, either with respect to those which may be call'd *Original*, as perceiv'd immediately by the senses of Spectators, or those which are *traditionary*, as convey'd to us only by Historical Relation, or living Witnesses.

You say, That "Miracles *alone* consider'd can prove *nothing* at all, and ought "to have no *weight and influence* with any Body. Here by Miracles *alone* consider'd, I suppose you mean, Miracles consider'd apart by themselves, and abstracted from the *Quality* of the Doctrines taught then by the Worker of Miracles. Well; admitting for the *present*, that Miracles thus consider'd *alone* can prove nothing; what is this to your purpose of proving, that Miracles can prove nothing in *any* Circumstances, that they *never* can be taken for *proper Evidence of Doctrines*, and ought in *no Case* to have *any Weight or Influence with any Body*? You are pleas'd yourself to give them even *alone* so much *weight and influence* afterwards, as to raise and demand the *Attention* of Men to the Doctrines then deliver'd; which I will prove by and by to be of much more Consequence, than you was aware of.

But

But their Use with your leave must be carried still higher, even to that Degree of being *proper Evidence* of those Doctrines. Not indeed as *Principles* of Knowledge, from whence *Propositions* are deduc'd, but as clear and indisputable *Testimonies* to a *Fact*. For suppose these *Miracles* not mere *accidental Phenomena*, unattempted, unforeseen, and unexpected by any Man in this juncture, but to be wrought upon a previous warning and at the special Instance of certain Persons, and likewise superadded to Doctrine from those Men, that is perfectly good and beneficial in itself, and every way worthy of God; Will Miracles in this Case too *prove nothing at all, Philalethes?* Depend upon it, more than all your *Logic* would confute. They would shew to Demonstration, that God Almighty does attest and confirm the Truth and divine Authority of that Doctrine. Because it would be plain from the *Nature* of the *Effects*, that no *Human Power* could produce them; and as plain from the *Quality* of the Doctrine, that no *evil Superior Beings* would assist in it, for the Benefit of Mankind and to the Ruin of their own Interests in the World; and consequently, that these Miracles must be

CHAP. be effected either directly by God Himself,

II. or, which amounts to the same thing, by
 good Spirits acting under *his* Direction, and
 in constant Subjection and Obedience to
 Him. So that here the Supreme Being
 must appear to *acknowledge* and *approve* the
 Doctrine as his own, and to seal as it were a
 divine Commission to the visible worker of
 Miracles; and if so, the Doctrine must be
 certainly *true*, since all agree, that the moral
 Attributes of God render it absolutely im-
 possible *for Him* to attest a falshood, and
 confirm an Imposture (g). But of this more
 hereafter. The objections with you against
 any such inferences from the Miracles are
 only these. *1st.* "That there *can be* no
 "Connection between the Power of work-
 "ing Miracles, and the Doctrines taught
 "by the Miracle-workers. Why not, pray,
Philaletbes? Give us one good Reason for
 this grand Impossibility, if it be only to im-
 prove a little upon poor Dr. *Tindal*, who
 asserted exactly the same thing before you.
 It is true indeed, that a *constant* and *necessa-*

(g) Κομῶν ἄρα ὁ Θεὸς ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀληθῶς ἢ π (f. deest ἢ π)
 ἔργῳ καὶ ἐν λόγῳ. Καὶ ἢ αὐτὸς μεδίετα, ἢ ἄλλος ΕΞ-
 ΑΠΑΤΑ, ἢ δι' κατὰ φαντασίας, ἢ κατὰ λόγους, ἢ κατὰ ΣΗ-
 ΜΕΙΩΝ ΠΟΜΠΑΣ. ἐν ὕμνῳ, ἐν δ' ὁμῳ. *Plat. Republ. Lib.*
 2^a. p. 154. Ed. Maff.



By Connection there is not at *all* times, between the power of working Miracles and the Doctrine taught by the Miracle-Workers. And the only thing, with which Miracles are immediately and universally connected of themselves, is their *Cause* efficient, i. e. a *supernatural* Power with respect to us. But how will you shew, that Miracles and Doctrine can *never* be so connected in *Fact*, that one shall be a certain *Sign* or *Argument* of the other? I will venture to assert, that in some particular circumstances the power of working Miracles is as necessarily connected with the Truth of Doctrines, as the Attributes of Wisdom, Holyness, and Goodness are connected with the Being of God. But you, it seems, because you find them not connected like a *physical Cause and Effect*, or like the Ideas in a strict Geometrical Demonstration, will needs persuade us, that they *are* not and *cannot* be connected *at all* in any Case. And for just the same reason you might argue, and with rather more strength and plausibility, that because in themselves *Words* have no *necessary* connection with *Thoughts*, nor Parchments with Estates, nor Seals with Contracts, therefore they have *no* Connection

at.

CHAP. at all with one another, nor *ought to have*
 II. *any weight or influence with any Body.*



Whereas these things, we know, are connected in *Fact*, or made to infer and include one another by Custom and Law, tho' not from the *abstract* nature of the things themselves. And so Miracles and Doctrines *may* certainly be connected, as will be shewn hereafter, or infer and include each other by some *extrinsic* Medium, *viz.* The Wisdom, or Power, or Goodness of Almighty God. But I suppose the ground of your former position may lye in your next Objection, which is this, "That false Prophets, the most wicked Seducers, and "even the Devil Himself may work Miracles. Nay not only that they *may*, but "actually *have* work'd Miracles, which they "could not have done, had Miracles been "any Evidence and Proof of Truth and "sound Doctrine. p. 81. That is to say, in other words, because Miracles are not *Evidence* of Truth and sound Doctrine in *all* Cases, therefore they are not *Evidence* of the same in *any*. Because there may be *diabolical* Miracles, therefore *none* whatsoever can be prov'd *divine*.

of,

Now for my part, *Philaethes*, I cannot CHAP.
discern with all the Attention I am master II.
of, the necessary *Connection* here between
these premises and Conclusions; and what
is more, I see very plain, if I'm not exceed-
ingly deceiv'd, abundance of Fallacy and
weakness in the whole. For what if the
Devil or his Agents may work *some sort* of
Miracles, does it therefore follow, that *He*
or *they* may work *all* sorts and in *all* Degrees,
and rival the *Divine* Power itself? That's
a Consequence, which few *Philosophers* will
allow, and what I shall endeavour to dis-
prove presently. And yet your former
Conclusion will drop immediately, if this
should be disprov'd. For if there be *any*
Miracles, which lye far out of the reach of
that wicked one, and can only be ascrib'd to
the Interposition of God himself, appearing
in Confirmation of certain Doctrines and
Persons, those Miracles will be plain indubi-
table Evidences to the *Truth* of the one, and
divine Commission of the other. Again,
suppose these Miracles of false Prophets to
be absolutely *overrul'd* upon the Spot by
Miracles of a *Superior* Power on the other
side, must the *latter* lose all their force and
influence, because the *former* happen'd to
F exist?

CHAP. exist? So far from it, that instead of losing

II. they would gain Authority and Credit by the others production; and would from thence become most pregnant and solid Proofs of a *divine* Interposition. This therefore is a Second objection to your Consequence. And a third is no less obvious; That allowing Seducers to work Miracles in *some* Circumstances, are we therefore to conclude they might do the same in *all*? By what Logic, *Philaethes*, would you draw such Inferences as these? Let me beg you never more to banter us *Christian Jews* for *Paralogisms*, if You our *Philosophical* Correctors can see no fault in this Reasoning. The Truth is, all that you can fairly plead is this, that every Miracle is not of itself an incontestible Argument of Truth in Doctrines; which indeed 'twould be strange if it should, since a *Miracle* may be wrought without any Design at all to attest the divine Mission of particular Persons, or the divine Authority of a *new* system of Doctrines. For which and other reasons you are to know, that we do not attribute this Power to every *Miracle* as such, or merely because it is a *Miracle*; but what I shall assert with others is, that Miracles of a certain

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(b) Spin
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tain *Quality* and *kind*, and with certain cir-
cumstances attending them may have this
Effect; so that in *some* cases Miracles will
even *alone*, that is, without regard to the
quality of Doctrines deliver'd by the wor-
kers of them, be *certain* Evidence of divine
Truth in those Doctrines; and in *all* Cases
they will carry that Evidence with them,
in Conjunction with Doctrine, that has no-
thing *immoral*, nothing evidently *false*, or
unbecoming the Holyness and Majesty of
God to attest. In the last of which Points,
I believe that all *Philosophers* agree with
me, but those *minute* ones of *Spinoza's* (*b*)
ridiculous Opinion, who resolve all possible
Miracles into *hidden material* Causes, whose
Powers and Operations being not compre-
hended fully by us are attributed, say they,
thro' ignorance to extraordinary Agencies
of God himself. As if because we are not
perfectly acquainted, and never shall be,
with *all* the Secrets of Nature, therefore
we can never know enough of it by Philo-
sophy and common Experience, nor even a
Boyle or *Newton* by their deepest Researches,
to pronounce any single Effect above the na-

(b) *Spinoz*. Tractat. Theologico-Polit. cap. vi. p. m. 99.

CHAP. tural Powers of Matter and Mechanism.

II. Mere Folly and Revery! so often and so effectually exploded (i), that without dwelling longer upon it, I shall take for granted the possibility of such *supernatural* Effects; and maintain in the first place,

1st. That if they are wrought to confirm a Religious System, by which Mankind are drawn off from Error and Vice, from Idolatry, Superstition, and Corruption to the knowledge and Worship of the true God, and the practice of Universal Righteousness: And especially if they tend to the Overthrow of the kingdom of Satan, to destroy the Influence and Impostures of Evil Spirits, to ruin the Temples, Altars and Institutions of the Father of Lies, then 'tis certain and indisputable, that both the *Doctrine* and *Miracles* are from God, and could not proceed from any evil Spirits. From the latter they could not, because they are inconsistent with the Nature, Temper, Designs and Practices of those Beings; whose constant Aim and Endeavour has and will always

(i) See *Le Clerc. Des Miracl.* § iv. v. *Post. De l'Incredulité. Fabric. Delect. Argument. Cap. 43. p. 695, 696. Bp. Leng. Serm. xiii. p. m. 396—402. Alphons. Turretine Oper. Tom. 2. Diss. xiv. § xi. Seq.*

be to corrupt the World by various Strata-
gems and Delusions; to deprave Men's
Minds with vicious Principles, and seduce
them from God and Goodness to the grossest
Impurities and Iniquities. So that for *Evil*
Spirits by the working of Miracles to pro-
mote such a System of Piety and Virtue, is
to act wilfully and zealously in direct Op-
position to themselves, and the utter De-
struction of their own Interests and Power
in the World; which is quite absurd in it-
self, and till they cease to be what they
are, impossible to happen.

Now if Miracles in this Case could not
be refer'd to the Devil or his Ministers, they
must either be produc'd by *God himself*, as
I mention'd before; or (which amounts to
the same thing) by *good* Spirits acting by his
Direction and Assistance; who by Nature
and Principle are likewise incapable of usur-
ping the Name of that God, whose obedi-
ent and faithful Servants they are, and of
imposing any falsehoods upon Men, to whose
Happiness and Salvation we are told, *they*
are sent forth to Minister (k). Besides in this
Case, where the Miracles are suppos'd to
be *real*, and exceeding all the Art and Power

(k) Heb. i. 14.

CHAP. of Man, and when the Doctrine attested by
 II. them is thus excellent and beneficial in it-
 self, if they both are not *divine*, it is im-
 possible for us to discover and prove them
 to be otherwise; they have all the Marks
 and Signatures of Divinity upon them, that
 they could be expected to have, did they
really come from God; therefore they must
 be *of God*, and we cannot but acknowledge
 Him to be their Author. For that which
 all the Wit and Diligence of Man cannot
 prove to be *not divine*, when 'tis necessary
 at the same time to ascribe it to some in-
 telligent Being superior to Man, must un-
 doubtedly and unavoidably be in fact *divine*;
 or else God would suffer his own Name and
 Authority to be usurp'd and abus'd, and
 Mankind to be impos'd upon in a thing of
 the last Consequence, without any possibi-
 lity of discovering the Imposture; and that
 would in all Respects be the very same
 thing, as if God did work Miracles to deceive
 Men himself, even the wisest, most honest,
 and most virtuous of Men; Which the At-
 tributes of God his Wisdom, Goodness, and
 Truth will no more permit him to do, than
 to deny himself, or attest a falshood. And
 indeed, it is as certain, that we shall not be
 deceiv'd

deceiv'd by such Miracles and such Doctrines as these, as it can be that we shall not be totally deceiv'd by our very Senses. For what is the ultimate Ground of our certainty in these, but those very attributes of God, his Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth? We are sure, that the Report of our Senses is true, when the Distance of the Object, the Disposition of the Medium, and all other Circumstances are rightly qualified, for no other reason, but this, that the Author of Nature and of all our Senses and Faculties, will not suffer us to be absolutely deceiv'd by those very Faculties, which he gave us himself. And from hence, you may see, *Philaethes*, how the Power of working Miracles is connected with the Truth of Doctrines, namely, by the Attributes of God natural and Moral: And how in these Cases they may be certainly distinguish'd from the Miracles of *Seducers* and the Devil himself, even when the Miracles themselves may not wholly exceed the *Physical* Power of all Evil Beings; namely, by such Doctrines attending them as those abovemention'd, as contrary to the Doctrines espous'd and propagated by Diabolical Agents and Wonders, as Light to Darkness; of which the whole

CHAP. Pagan World *antient* and *Modern* is a glaring
 II. and deplorable Example. You may see like-
 wise here, that the Miracles are the only
proper Evidence of the Doctrine's coming
 from God, tho' not the only Evidence of it's
 Truth. The *moral Reason and Fitness* of it
 may indeed recommend it to our Practice
 as good and true; but it only *qualifies* it for
 being *divine*, or renders it *capable* of com-
 ing from God; it is the Power of Miracles
 superadded to it, which proves directly,
 that it *actually does come from God*, and con-
 sequently proves much more, than the other
 alone ever could do.

BUT whatever Force and Authority may
 be attributed to Miracles, when joyn'd with
 Doctrine thus excellent and beneficial to
 Mankind in itself, you may still object, that
 Miracles *alone* and *in themselves* are no Evi-
 dence of divine Truth in the Doctrines taught
 by the workers of them, so that upon seeing
 the Miracles we may safely admit the Doc-
 trines attested by them. Now whether they
 are or not, is a Point, which is not very
necessary for me to determine; since it is
 sufficient for us to be assur'd, that Miracles
 in the case abovemention'd have Weight
 enough to prove a *divine* Authority, and
 that

that such is exactly the Case of those *divine* CHAP.
Revelations, which I undertake to defend II.
in the Sequel. 

HOWEVER as I think this a Point of no
small Importance as to the *Use* of Miracles,
and their due *Effect* upon those, for whose
Benefit they are chiefly design'd; and ap-
prehending that it has not been consider'd
by some writers with that Care and Judg-
ment it requir'd, I shall advance a Step far-
ther, and hope to shew,

2d. That Miracles *alone* in the Sense gi-
ven above will in *some* Cases be satisfactory
Evidence of a *divine* Mission in the wor-
kers of them. And what to me a *Priori* is
a strong presumptive Argument of their be-
ing so, is the manifest Inconsistency of the
other Hypothesis with the very *Condition*
of that People, for whose *sake* God should
raise up at any time his extraordinary Mes-
sengers, endued with such Miraculous
Powers. For if God ever favours Mankind
with such a special *Revelation* of his Will
and Instructions from Heaven in a way *Su-
pernatural*, it is certainly in that unhappy
juncture, when the *Principles* and *Practises*
of Mankind are so miserably deprav'd and
corrupted, as to *want* the Light and Assis-
stance

CHAP. stance of *Revelation* extremely, and are (hith-

II. manly speaking) utterly incorrigible without it. Now to say, that in these particular circumstances Men are not to depend on *any real Miracles*, but before they admit *them* as Evidence of the Prophet's divine Mission, they must carefully examine his *Doctrine*, to see if that be perfectly good and true, is either to *suppose* these People furnish'd already with *Principles* and *Knowledge* requisite for that purpose, contrary point blank to the real Truth of their Case; or else it is to assert, that they who are utterly destitute of *Principles* and *Knowledge* requisite for that work, must nevertheless undertake it without them, and judge of the *Truth* of the Prophets *Doctrine* and *Authority*, by *their false* Principles of Religion and Morality; which in short is to fix them immoveably where they are already, in *old erroneous* Principles, against any *new* and *true* ones that should be offer'd. Especially with the Bulk of Mankind, full of Darkness and Prejudice, this must be unavoidably the Consequence; and the *more* they wanted a Reformation in Principle and Practise, the *less* capable would they be of receiving it in this Method. Thus for Instance

stance, were a Teacher sent from Heaven CHAP.
with *Signs and Wonders* to a Nation of rank II.
Idolaters, and they previously instructed to W
regard *no* Miracles of his whatsoever, till
they were fully satisfied upon due Consideration of the *goodness* of his Doctrine, it is
easy to foresee by what *Rule* they would
prove his Doctrine, and what success it
would meet with amongst them. For, be
sure, they would judge of it by their *present*
receiv'd Notions in Religion, and therefore
if the Worship of *one* Supreme Being and
the total Extirpation of their *Idols* were an
Article of this Prophet's Lesson; that alone
would with ninety-nine Parts in a hundred
be Objection sufficient against it, and make
them deaf and insensible to all the rest.
Add to this, what is likewise exceedingly
material, the great Delays and perplexities
attending this way of proceeding. For if
every Article of Doctrine must be scann'd
and discuss'd minutely by every Person of
all *ranks and Conditions*, to whom it is of-
fer'd, what *slow* advances would be made
by a divine *Revelation* among such a
People, and how tedious and difficult a thing
must their *Conversion* become? Hundreds
would probably be cut off, before they came

CHAP. to the End of their Queries, and the Pro-

II. phet might grow decrepit with old Age, before he gain'd twenty *Profelytes* in a Nation. Whereas, no doubt, the Design of Almighty God in such Cases must be to give *direct* and *immediate* Evidence of his Will by his Prophets and Miracles, and an Evidence surely not *grounded* and *dependent* wholly on *their Errors* and *Prejudices*, but powerful enough in itself to overrule and correct *them*, and eminent enough to baffle Opposition, to outline any rival wonders of the *Devil*, and to guide them *safely* to divine *Truth*. Which Effects are morally impossible upon the former Hypothesis in it's *largest* extent; and had it once been receiv'd universally in antient times, it had cut off, I'm afraid, all hopes and means of turning one *Pagan* Nation to Righteousness and Truth. So far is it really from answering those Ends, which, no doubt, it was design'd to promote, of guarding Mankind against the Mischiefs of Delusion and Imposture. It is indeed a proper Lesson to a People enjoying *already* a divine Revelation, or a System of pure Religion and Morality; and it serves with *us* for a Caution against any *lying* Wonders of the *Romanists*

or future Seducers; but to a People not CHAP.
 bless'd with the same Advantages, and ly- II.
 ing under the most dismal circumstances of Error and Corruption, it cannot be applied
 in my Opinion with any shew of reason, but would serve only to continue them in
 their present State, and to obstruct insupe-
 rably their Recovery out of it. Where-
 fore I am perswaded, that as *Miracles*, plain
 and undoubted Miracles, would be the only
 effectual *Means* of delivering such a People
 from this wretched Condition, and as they
 by their Ignorance and Superstition would
 be absolutely *disqualified* for judging pro-
 perly of the nature of *Doctrines*, especially
 the rude undisciplin'd Multitude, so, that
 the Goodness and Wisdom of Almighty God
 would render it *unnecessary* for them to ex-
 amine the *Doctrine* of his Messengers, and
 would make (by provisional securities to be
 mention'd hereafter) the plain Miracles *alone*
 sufficient and infallible Evidence of his Will
 and Authority.

I am aware, *Philaetbes*, and readily al-
 low, what some considerable writers have
 said upon this Head, namely, that what is
false cannot be prov'd by any Miracles to be
true, nor what is *bad* to be *good*; and that
 Miracles

CHAP. Miracles in general are not *universally* as

II. *such* either the *necessary* Effects of God's Power, or Proofs of his Authority; but what I intend to assert with the Learned *Cudworth, Barrow, Mosheim, Mr. Lock,* and others, is, that considering the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, and the limited Nature of his Creatures, some Sorts of Miracles there are, and some *circumstances* of them, which never did or will or can in my Opinion concur to attest what is *false* or *Evil*, and by which antecedent to the consideration of the Doctrine confirm'd by them, we may certainly know them to be *divine*, and not those of the *Devil* or his Instruments. And in order to prepare the Way for what follows, I would only premise these few plain Principles. 1st. That as God is the Supreme Lord and Governour of the Universe, over all Beings from the highest to the lowest, so He will always preserve *visibly* in his Works and Ways that high Character and Dignity, and never suffer his own Power and Will to appear *equall'd* or *controulable* by any Beings *inferior* and Subject to Him. 2^d. That as by *your* Confession he may reveal *supernaturally* to Mankind *such* religious Truths, as might

might be greatly *expedient* and desirable to a corrupt and ignorant World; so the only Method of proving, that any such *Supernatural* Revelation is really deriv'd from Him, must be by *Supernatural Evidence*. And without a particular *Inspiration* of every individual (which upon many accounts is improper and unreasonable to be expected) that *Supernatural Evidence* must consist in *Miraculous Powers* confer'd on his Messengers. 3d. That God will always confirm his own Revelations with such Degrees of *Supernatural Evidence* or *miraculous Powers*, as may be *fully sufficient* to prove their Original from him, and to render them easily *distinguishable* from those of *Seducers*. 4th. That he will so far restrain all inferior Beings in the Exercise of their Power either *natural* or *delegated*, as on *no* occasion they may really assist Impostors with *Signs* and *Wonders*, which would *equal* or *rival* to the most improv'd Understandings of Men even those of his own special Messengers. 5th. That he will not suffer any People to be *tempted* by the *Signs* and *Wonders* of *Seducers*, above that which their *Frailties* and *Capacities* enable them to bear.

THESE,

CHAP.

II.



THESE, I believe, are Principles, which all who have a due sense of the Nature and Attributes of God will readily admit without dispute; and from them I proceed to argue as follows.

1st. THAT the very *Nature* alone of *some* Miracles will directly shew them to be *divine*, or at least not Effects of any *Evil* Spirits; they being such as 'tis utterly incredible, those Spirits should either be naturally *enabled*, or, if they were, *permitted* by the sovereign Lord of all things to produce. And here let me observe, that in order to judge of any Miracles in this View, it is by no means *necessary* for us to know exactly, and determine precisely the utmost limits, to which the *physical* Power of all *created* Intelligences may extend; it being abundantly sufficient in the present Case, for us to be assur'd, how far the Power of *evil* Beings either *cannot* or *will* not extend. For if this be once clearly ascertain'd in some particular Instances, the Evidence of divine Authority from Miracles will no longer remain *to us* doubtful and precarious, *whatever* powers we suppose confer'd on *other* orders of Spirits; since that will be the *same*, whether Miracles proceed in any Case

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Case immediately from God himself, or his CHAP.
subordinate Ministers. It is farther to be II.

observ'd as to *Evil* Spirits, that their very 
Condition bespeaks an inferiority of *natural*
Endowments to those of some other Orders
of Intelligences. For had *they* been plac'd
in the *bighest* Class, in the *nearest* Approa-
ches to the Deity, and endued with the
noblest *perfections* in *Mind* and *Will*, which
any *Creatures* in the Universe enjoy by the
Bounty of Almighty God, their *intellectual*
and *Moral* Accomplishments would surely
have been great enough, to have preserv'd
them everlastingly from Rebellion and Re-
probation; since a conduct of this kind
could never arise from a Depth of *Under-*
standing and a *purity* of Nature, the *next*
in rank thro' the whole scale of *Creatures*
to the *Divine*. It argues rather an *Imper-*
fection in both, the nearest *Human*; or if
that be uncertain, yet, I think, it may as-
sure us, that as they were not the *wisest* nor
the *purest*, so neither are they the most *pow-*
erful of all Beings under God; since, no
doubt, these different Endowments bear in
them a suitable proportion to one another.
And besides, it is quite improbable, that
God should endue *originally* those Beings;

G

with

CHAP. with the *greatest* degrees of *Power* next his
 II. own, whom he certainly *foreknew* would be
 dispos'd to abuse them so grossly, in Oppo-
 sition and Emulation to himself.

THESE things being premis'd, let us
 now consider the *Nature* of some *Miracles*.
 I begin with that amazing one of raising the
 dead to life, and that *instantly* perhaps, up-
 on the bare utterance of a few words, and
 sometime after a total Dissolution in the
 Grave. Now I ask, were a Person to work
 a Miracle of this sort in Evidence to his
 Mission from God, and to the Doctrine
 which he preaches in his Name, what *rea-
 sonable* exception, *Philaletbes*, could you
 raise against admitting his *divine* Authori-
 ty? Would you plead, that the *Devil* might
 work it by his *natural* Power, as well as
 raise a *tempest*, or carry a Man aloft thro'
 the Air? If you did, you would be the on-
 ly *Philosopher* I know of, not excepting
Spinoza (1) himself, that would think so;
 since those, who make the largest Allow-
 ances to *evil* Beings, exclude them unani-

(1) What Mr. Bayle relates of *Spinoza* is very remarkable.
 " He said, if he could believe the Resurrection of *Lazarus*,
 " he would break his system to pieces, and willingly em-
 " brace the *Christian* Faith. Critic. Dict. Art. *Spinoza*.

mously

(m) Comp.
 Borrow. Wor

moufly from *this* mighty work; agreeing with Dr. Clarke, "That some *ſingular* Miracles, ſuch as *raiſing the dead*, there is "all the reaſon in the world to believe, are "absolutely beyond the power of *evil Spi-* "rits to effect. *Evidences. &c.* p. m. 305 (m). And this Opinion is founded on moſt weigh- ty and ſubſtantial reaſons. 1^{ſt}. Be cauſe that ſupreme Governour of the World, in whom we live, and move, and have our Being, re- ſerves to himſelf undoubtedly, as his pecu- liar Prerogative, the Power of *Life and Death*, and determines by his own Decree the *State of departed Souls*, to which they are confin'd, and cannot be remov'd by any Creature without his particular Appoint- ment. 2^d. The very Act of reſtoring the corrupted Body to it's former Symmetry, Vigour, and Powers in a moment, is plainly tantamount to that of forming, organizing, and animating it at firſt; and, if any one Effect may be deem'd to exceed the Power of a *Creature*, ſurely this does ſo by many degrees. For it is not like many other ſtrange Operations, of which ſuperior invi- ſible Spirits are capable, to be perform'd by

(m) Comp. Bp. Hoadley. Lett. to Bp Fleetwood. p. 12. Dr. Barrow. Works. Vol. II. p. m. 281.

CHAP. mere *Art, Agility, Strength, Sleight &c.*

II. or by sudden combinations and modifications of mere *Matter and Mechanism* once put in motion, as even Men themselves form curious Machines &c. by a certain sagacious Construction and Adjustment of parts; because here it is demonstrable, as learned *Physicians* and *Philosophers* have prov'd at large (n) that the *Animal Life, Sensation, Motion*, with the several Vital Functions of the Body, are things which cannot result from any bare Composition of *Matter and Mechanism* with a Motion once impress'd upon it, and are even *inconsistent* with the common Laws of *Mechanism*, as well as *unaccountable* by them. So that a Being, which produces all these *really and perfectly*, especially on pronouncing a *Word* and *instantaneously*, must do it by a Power *inherent in himself*, superior to and independent of *Matter* and *second Causes*, and must by his mere *Will* communicate Faculties to the Man, underivable ab-

(n) See *Cheyne. Philosoph. Principl. &c. Ch. iii. § x, xi, xii. Ch. v. §. vii, viii. Ch. vi. tot. Nieuentyt. Relig. Philosoph. Contempl. vi, viii, ix, x, xii, xiii, xiv, xv. Baxter. Enquiry into the Nat. of Hum. Soul. Vol. I. p. 127-186. Bentley. Confut. of Atheism. Sermon. iv.*

solutely

folutely from any thing else extraneous to CHAP.
 it. And if so, I leave any Man to judge II.
 how *unwarrantable* and even *irrational* it ~
 must be to ascribe an Effect of *this* kind,
 produc'd by Virtue of a mighty *Fiat*, like
 that by which the World itself was *spoken*
 into Existence, to a mere *Creature*, not on-
 ly *inferior* to God, but in all probability to
 many other *Creatures*. And what makes
 it the more *unwarrantable* is, that whether
 we judge of the Case by *Reason* or *Scripture*,
 this Supposition is equally groundless. If
 we first consult *Reason* alone, that does not
 inform us *certainly* so much as of the bare
Existence of any other intelligent Be-
 ings besides *God* and *ourselves*; and tho' I
 allow very *probable* Conjectures might be
 form'd from thence concerning it; yet we
 have not the least *intimations* from thence
 alone (o), of *apostate* and *evil* Spirits, much
 less of such mighty *Powers* belonging to
 them. So that bare *Reason* would give us
 no foundation for ascribing such Effects to
them. And if from hence we consult the
 holy *Scriptures*, they are full and express

(o) I mean from *abstract* Reason, which assertion does by no
 means interfere with Dr. Cudworth's arguments from *Magick*
Possessions &c. *Intellect. Syst. ch. v. Sect. 82. Seq.*

CHAP. against it. *I am he, and there is no God be-*

II. *sides me; I kill, and I make alive.* Deut.

xxxii. 39. Again, *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.* 1 Sam. ii. 6. So weak and frivolous in the whole would such pretences as those abovemention'd appear to considerate Men. But now if *evil* Beings are indisputably out of the question, the Effect must be attributed to the *Agency* or *Interposition* of God; and if so, the Doctrine, in evidence to which it is wrought, must be *true* and *divine*, and the Person acting in his Name must be likewise receiv'd as his Messenger; because as Mr. Chandler justly argues, "It is not reconcileable with any "of the *divine* *perfections*, to imagine that "God himself will actually *support false* "pretensions, or *exert his own power* in "confirmation of a lye (p). To which may be added, that where the Evidence of *divine power* appears so strong and overbearing in the *nature* of the Miracle, we may depend upon the *goodness* of God for not being *deceiv'd* in following that Evidence; he will not suffer us to *err* in ascribing that work to *Him*, which we could not ascribe to any

{p} Chandler. Discourse of Miracles. p. 64.

evil Being, without doing the greatest violence to our *rational* faculties. CHAP. II.

AGAIN farther. For these or the like reasons, we may safely pronounce, I should think, those Miracles likewise *Divine*, or at least, *not* the Effects of any *evil* Beings, wherein are produc'd *instantaneous* Supplies of great *Natural* Defects in the Human Body, by *new* Organs of Sensation, *new* Vessels and Limbs with their *Vital* Uses and Functions; or a *perfect* and *immediate* Reparation of the same, when absolutely *decay'd* and *perish'd* by Accidents or Distempers. For whatever may be said of curing some little Disorders in the Body, by suddenly *removing* any small *Obstructions* &c. *within*, or altering the State of the *Air* &c. *without*, the Effects abovemention'd, when *real* and *permanent*, must needs exceed the Power of those limited *Creatures*; and the more we know of the *Animal Oeconomy*, the more reason we have continually to think so. You are not unacquainted, *Philaletbes*, if I'm rightly inform'd, with the exquisite Texture, Structure, and Powers of the parts, composing any one *Limb* or *Organ*, as the *Eye*, *Ear*, *Arm*, *Leg*, *Hand* &c. the inexpressible Number of small vessels and Nerves

CHAP. in every *carneous* Member, causing a *Sen-*

II. *sation* and *Nutrition* in every Point of it, together with the most curious secretion and distribution of Juices throughout the whole, and the wonderful Action of the Muscles in every *voluntary* Motion of ours. Now with what *probability* or *colour* could we suppose, that any such *Organ* or *Limb* with all its proper constituents (or a number of these) should be *immediately*, when absolutely *wanting* or *lost* or *decay'd* before, restor'd by some *Evil* Spirit upon the bare utterance of a word, with all those Beauties and Faculties, which are visible in those of the *same* kind, when form'd by the *Creator* himself? Especially when here too, it may be clear to Demonstration, that the *Vital Functions* of each and *Subserviencies* to the Soul of Man, could not possibly arise from *Matter* and *Mechanism*, by any mere *Skill* and *Contrivance* of the Agent. For my part, I could not forbear acknowledging the *Finger of God* in these as in the other Work; and should not in the least be apprehensive of any ill Consequences by it from *Seducers*. And whoever considers attentively the *Nature* of the work in these or the like Cases, and the *manner* in which it

it is produc'd, will see, I believe, abundant CHAP.
reason to agree with me in their judgment II.
of it; and whoever is endued with such Powers, and appeals to *them* for Evidence of his Mission from God, may safely without doubt, and ought in Justice to be receiv'd as coming with divine Authority, and by the Will and Command of Heaven.

NEITHER are these the only Instances, in which the *Nature* of the Miracle itself will shew the Author of it. The following likewise in my Opinion will carry plainly the same Characters of Divinity in them. Philosophy and Experience assure us, that the visible System of Things, comprehend- ed in the *Eastern* Expression of *Heavens* and *Earth*, is continually preserv'd and sup- ported by the watchful Providence of God, and carried on thro' all it's workings and movements, under the absolute Direction and Government of it's great Artificer. Nay 'tis even demonstrable upon the Principles of the best Philosophy, that the present uniform, regular *Course of Nature* (as it is commonly stiled) is every moment sustain'd, by the continual Action upon *Matter*, either
of

CHAP. of God himself (q), or subordinate Beings,

II. appointed by Him, according to certain
 ~~~~~ fix'd Rules of Uniformity and Proportion;  
 and without such continual Action of a Superior Intelligence upon it, the present Frame and Order of the World would sink into Confusion. And from hence we are farther assur'd, that Evil Spirits are not suffer'd in *Fact* to interfere *at pleasure* with the regular Scheme of Nature, to obstruct the Wheels of this grand Machine, and disorder the motions of it; if they were, we should see the Effects of their turbulent and mischievous Tempers, in frequent Exorbitances, Interruptions, and Confusions of Nature. But the *King of Kings* ruleth over all without End, he curbs and confines those rebellious Beings, and defeats or prevents any wicked Attempts of theirs upon the present Constitution of Nature. Thus far, I think, even those who allow the greatest Liberty or Power to Evil Spirits, agree with me. But here a Question arises, whether if any great and visible *interruption*

(q) See *Bentley, Boyle Lect.* Serm. vii. p. 240—256. Ed. 6. Dr. *Clarke. Evidences &c.* p. 16, 17, 18, 300—305. Ed. 5. Comp. *Newton. Optic. Quest.* ultim. p. 406, 407. Ed. Lat.



to the Laws of Nature be effected, at the In-CHAP.  
stance of a Person pretending to come from II.  
God with a special Revelation of his Will, ~~~~~  
we may safely ascribe it to the Agency of  
God, and receive that Person as *his* Messen-  
ger. For my part, I am thoroughly con-  
vinc'd we may, and with me concur the  
Learned *Cudworth* (r), *Barrow* (s), *Stillings-*  
*fleet* (t), *Mosheim* abovesaid, Dr. *Pride-*  
*aux* (u), and many others. Against us the  
most considerable Man is the eminent Dr.  
*Clarke*, who is follow'd by several late in-  
genious writers upon that Subject. The  
Reason which He and They have alledg'd  
in support of their Opinion is in Substance  
only this, "That how certain soever it is,  
"that all created Beings are under some  
"particular Laws and Restraints, yet it can  
"never be prov'd, that they are under such  
"Restraints universally, perpetually, and  
"without Exception. And without this,  
"A Spectator that sees a Miracle, can ne-  
"ver be certain that it was not done by some  
"created Being (x). I would not assert,

(r) *Cudworth*. ub. sup. § 86. *Mosheim*. in loc. (s) *Bar-*  
*row*. ub. sup. p. 282. (t) *Stillingsf.* ub. sup. (u) *Prideaux*.  
Lett. to the Deists. p. 207. Ed. 8. (x) *Clarke*. Evidences,  
p. 299.

any

CHAP. any more than the learned Doctor, that

II. Evil Spirits are *universally* and *perpetually* *restrain'd* from ever *interposing* in *this lower World*, and producing *some* Effects which may justly be term'd *Miraculous*. That is not very probable in itself, nor necessary at all for me to maintain. But what I intend to assert, is, that God does so far restrain those Beings *universally*, as to hinder them from *really interrupting* the true *Laws of Nature*, by Miracles in favour of Impostors. I say *really interrupting* the true *Laws of Nature*; because it is not every *supernatural* or *miraculous* Effect, that does so; there being, as Dr. Cudworth and Prideaux very rightly observe "*abundance of things within those Laws, which exceed the Power of Man to effect, and therefore seem as Miracles to us, which may be produc'd by other created Beings (y)*. And, I imagine, what has chiefly occasion'd the Difficulties or Differences of Sentiments upon this Head, is an *improper* and *ambiguous* Use of the Terms, *Laws of Nature, Course of Nature* and the like; which I will therefore dis-

(x) Prideaux. ubi sup. Cudworth. Vol. II. p. 863. Ed. Mssb.

tinety

tingly explain, before I come to the Argument itself. CHAP. II.

IT is then to be observ'd, that *Laws of Nature* may either signify those, by which from the Will of the Creator are assign'd and fix'd to particular Bodies or Beings certain *internal* Qualities, Properties, Affections and Powers; such as belong to the different kinds of inanimate Bodies, or the different Species of Vegetables and Animals, or the different Orders of superior intelligent Beings. Or else, they may signify those, by which from the same Will of God, certain Bodies or parcels of Matter are *specially determin'd* to particular *States of Motion or Rest*, and to particular *Degrees or Manners* of acting upon one another. Instances of this latter sort are obvious, in the constant Revolutions of the Planets round their several centers, the Earth *e. g.* about the Sun, and the Moon about the Earth &c. and the mutual Gravitations of all according to establish'd Rules and Proportions towards one another. And so again, in the perpetual Rotation of our Earth about it's Axis, producing the Vicissitudes of Day and Night, and that of the Moon about her's, and the same *visibly* in *most* others.

Here



CHAP. Here we have special Determinations to

II. *Motion* in those vast Bodies. Others again, as the Sun and fix'd Stars, are determin'd by the same *Fiat* of the Almighty to a State of *Rest*, in certain Stations and Intervals always immoveable *progressively*, against an incessant Tendency from Gravity to desert them. And by the same sort of Laws are *particular Effects* invariably connected with and made dependent upon *particular Causes*; as the various products of the Earth, Grain, Herbs, Plants &c. and the successive Propagation of Animals; are producible only in a *natural way* from their respective *Seminal Causes* &c.

AND as the *Laws of Nature* may be thus distinguish'd, so may likewise the term *Course of Nature* admit of more Senses than one. It may signify either 1<sup>st</sup>. The uniform *Process* of all things by the Laws of God abovemention'd, and the *actual* Result of the whole from them. Or else, barely, the ordinary *Face* of things, and *Appearance* of Nature, which undoubtedly in Idea is widely different from the former, as confin'd to the *common* and *visible* Effects of the natural Laws.

Now

Now according to these different Senses CHAP. II.  
of *Laws of Nature* and *Course of Nature*, Things may likewise be said in a very different View and Extent to be *above* or *contrary* to, or to *change* and *interrupt* the same. Thus, for Instance, were a huge *Stone* or a *Man* suspended in the *Air* without any *Visible Support*, this would be a *Miracle* to us, and *contrary* in Appearance to the first sort of natural *Laws*, viz. The *Laws of Gravity* in all *Bodies* near the *Surface* of our *Globe*, by which they naturally tend downward towards the *Center* of the *Earth*. But if we suppose either the one or the other to be thus supported by some invisible Being, the *Phænomenon* would really be no more contrary to the *Laws of Nature*, than if a *Man* holds a *Stone* from falling in the *Air*, by overpowering the *Laws of Gravitation*. And 'tis farther evident, that in neither Case would there be any thing *contrary* to the second sort of *Laws of Nature* abovemention'd; because from the *Will* of *God* there is no *special Determination* of the *Stone* or the *Man* to a certain *Place*, or to a certain *State of Motion* or *Rest*. But was the *Sun* (to speak with the *Vulgar*) to be suddenly *stopt* in it's *Course* for some time, or visibly  
carried

CHAP. carried backwards several Degrees in the

II. Heavens; this would be contrary to the  
 ~~~~~ *Laws of Nature* and the *Course of Nature*  
 in the strictest Sense, whatever *Agent* be the
 Cause of it. For then would be plainly *sus-*
pended or *alter'd* that particular *State*, to
 which it was *constantly determin'd* before by
 the Will of God. And 'tis worth remark-
 ing, that in this Case of the Motions of the
 Heavenly Bodies (and any other of the like
 kind) when any *such* Change or Interruption
 of the *Laws of Nature* does happen, God
ceases to act himself in his usual Way, or at
 least *his Agents* by his own *Order*. Since
 according to Dr. *Clarke* himself, and most of
 the *New Philosophers*, the *universal Prin-*
ciple of Gravitation, which is the *Spring* of
these and almost all the great and regular
inanimate Motions in the World, must of ne-
cessity be caused by some *Immaterial Power*,
perpetually and actually exerting itself every
Moment on those vast Bodies (y). And if
 so, God in these Cases must *positively* inter-
 pose himself in some measure, and not ne-
 gatively only by a bare *Permission* to Evil

(y) *Clarke. Evidences &c.* p. 16, 17. First Lett. to Leib-
 niz. §. 4. Second Lett. §. 6, 7, 8. Compare the Learned
Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul. chap. ii.

Beings;

Beings; supposing they were permitted to CHAP.
interfere at any time with *such* Laws and II.
Course of Nature. 

Now this being premis'd, which seems to have escap'd the Observation of the great Man abovemention'd, my Conclusion from it is this, that Miracles of this latter sort, thus changing and interrupting the *Divine Laws of Nature*, must needs be a proof in themselves, of *his* divine Commission, at whose instance and Appeal they are wrought. Because here, God himself does evidently *concur* so far to the production of the Miracles, and is *visibly* concern'd in them. He suspends or alters those Rules and Methods, in which he had hitherto *appear'd* to exert his Power and Influence; and therefore this extraordinary Work must be *his* in all reasonable Construction, as he is manifestly *assisting* and *accessary* to it. And if so, the learned Doctor himself would have acknowledg'd, that it could not be wrought to confirm an Imposture, because it would signify to the World both his *Attestation* to it, and *Approbation* of it; which Reason tells us, he cannot give to Falshood and Delusions. Besides, it is absolutely incredible, and unbecoming his Honour and Ma-

H

jesty

CHAP. jesty, to interrupt his own Laws and Oper-

II. rations in the Heavens and the Earth, for no
 other reason, but to make way for the *Signs*
 and *Wonders* of Apostate Spirits. He would
 then not only suffer them to *Act*, but would
 even himself be *Ministerial* to it; and that
 too (which alone is an insuperable objection
 against it) when his *ministerial* concurrence
 with them here is wholly *unnecessary* and *Superfluous*; since without it, they might work
 many *wonderful* Things, by Virtue of their
Invisibilty, Agility, Strength, and Sagacity,
 and without interfering with the proper
 Laws of Nature, which might answer *sufficiently*
 the Ends and purposes of their working
 Miracles. Now for God to *suspend*
 or *change* in *this* manner without any *Necessity*
his own establish'd *Laws*, in pure
Subserviency to *his* and *our* Enemies, is
 such a Condescension in the Almighty to
 those Beings, as, I must own, exceeds my
 Faith, and clashes with all my Notions of
 the Godhead. And what confirms me very
 much in the contrary Opinion is a Reflection,
 "That we can *think* of no Evidence to a divine Revelation so certain to
 "all Mankind, as that which is given in
 "the Works of Nature; and it is reason-
 "able

(2) See an
 Evidence of



“able to expect, that the Supreme Being
 “should give Mankind Evidence of his
 “Will, after the same manner as he gave
 “them Evidence of his Existence and Attri-
 “butes, that is, in his *Works*. As he led
 “us by these to a knowledge of his Being,
 “so we may justly expect, that he would
 “give us Evidence of his Will in the same
 “Works, and by shewing his Power in
 “Nature. And how is it, that the Supreme
 “Being can give us Evidence of his Will in
 “the Works of Nature? Why as the Exis-
 “tence of things, and the constant, regu-
 “lar, uniform Laws, by which Bodies move
 “or rest, are a Proof of an *Eternal, Intelli-*
 “gent &c. Being; so a Change in these
 “Laws would be an Evidence of his Will.
 “——For as he is Lord of Nature, 'tis
 “strict Demonstration, no Being can *change*
 “his *Laws*, without his Consent (z). And
 farther, as *no* Miraculous change in the
 Laws of Nature would be more striking,
 conspicuous, and sensible to Mankind, than
 in these by which the *Solar System* is esta-
 blish'd and govern'd, I am persuaded, that
 He, by whose Wisdom and Power they

(z) See an ingenious Piece. entitul'd, *An Enquiry into the
 Evidence of the Christian Religion*. p. 31. 52. 1728.

CHAP. subsist, will never suffer any extraordinary

II. Change to be made in them, but in Evidence to that Person and Doctrine alone, that really *comes from Him*.

SUCH then, *Philaletes*, are the Miracles in particular, which in my Opinion would appear unquestionably *divine* from their very *Nature*, and not the Effects of any *Evil* Spirits. They bear upon them such illustrious Characters of a Sovereign *Dominion* over *Nature*, that we cannot, I think, *reasonably* ascribe them to any other Being, but the mighty Author of *Nature*. And not only these, but all other Miracles of the *like* kind, implying evidently the same *Degrees* and *Extent* of Power, must needs, if we follow the Dictates of sound Reason, be ascrib'd to the *same* efficient *Cause*. And according to my Apprehensions of things, we should act as *wisely* and *securely* too in doing thus, as in ascribing the *Original Formation* and the continual Subsistence of Men and other Animals to *God* alone, and the present constitution and Duration of the *Solar System* to his Providence and Government.

BUT farther. Could we suppose any Doubt from the *Nature* of the Miracles, there may be certain *circumstances* of them which

which never could admit of any, as to the CHAP.
Evidence of divine Authority and Power. II.

As for Instance, 1st. Suppose a Contest
to happen between two Persons, each of
them acting in the Name of God, and work-
ing Miracles to support their pretended Mis-
sions. In that Case you might easily know
by the Miracles themselves, which are re-
ally from God, and which not. For, to
use Mr. *Locke's* words, "Since God's Po-
wer is paramount to all, and no Opposi-
tion can be made against him with a Force
equal to His; and since his Honour and
Goodness can never be suppos'd to suffer
His Messenger and His Truth to be born
down by the Appearance of a greater Po-
wer on the side of an Impostor, and in
favour of a Lye; whenever there is an
Opposition, the Signs which carry with
them the evident Marks of a greater Po-
wer, will always be a certain and unques-
tionable Evidence, that the Truth and
Divine Mission are on that side on which
they appear. For though the Discovery,
how the *Lying Wonders* are or can be pro-
duc'd, be beyond the Capacity of the ig-
norant, and often beyond the Conception
of the most knowing Spectator, yet he

CHAP. "cannot but know, they are *not* Seals set
 II. * by God to his Truth for the attesting of
 ~ " it, since they are *oppos'd* by Miracles, that
 " carry the evident Marks of a *greater* and
 " *superior* Power; and therefore they can-
 " not at all shake the Authority of one so
 " supported. God can never be thought to
 " suffer that a lye, set up in Opposition to
 " a Truth coming from him, should be
 " back'd with a *greater* Power, than he will
 " shew for the Confirmation and Propaga-
 " tion of a Doctrine, which *He* has reveal-
 " ed, to the End it might be believ'd (a).
 This, I hope, you will allow, is a *possible*
 Case; and were this a proper time for it,
 I would shew it to be one, that has hap-
 pen'd in *fact viz.* that of *Moses* and the
Egyptian Sorcerers. But at present I am
 only concern'd with *generals*, and stating it
 in that View, should be glad to know,
 why Miracles *alone* in *these* Circumstances
 would prove nothing at all, and ought to have
 no weight or influence with any body. It is
 true, that the Miracles barely as Miracles
 do not here prove the Point of a divine
 Mission, because they are wrought by the
 Supposition on both sides. But the *Quality*

(a) Locke. Works. Tom. III. p. 453.

and

and *degree* of them *alone*, without any Consideration of the Doctrine, does prove it, and that beyond all reasonable Doubt and Dispute; unless you will suppose that *Evil* Beings are the Actors on both sides, which, I believe, you will hardly maintain. Indeed as to the Point of *Superiority* in the Miracles, I know some writers of Distinction have started a Difficulty, about the *means* of discerning in such a Contest, which Miracles are *Superior* and which not. But surely it is raising a Dust in Theory to little purpose, since, I think, we may safely presume, that an *infinite* Power on one side, may easily overrule and eclipse a *finite* one on the other, so far as to leave no Room for Ambiguity and Suspense to attentive Beholders, who have their Reason and Senses about them. But if that should be a Difficulty with you, *Philaethes*, I must only refer you now to a celebrated writer, who I believe, will give you full Satisfaction (b) upon that head.

BUT 2d. What if there be no Contest, no *Opposite* Pretensions of a *divine* Mission and Miracles, but one Person only comes

(b) See a Letter to Mr. Fleetwood &c. p. 8-10. by the present Ld. Bishop of Winchester.

CHAP. with that Character and Power, acting un-

II. *controulably* in the Name of God, and performing a *Series* of many real Miracles in Proof of it? Are Miracles *alone* in this Case to be admitted as proper and sufficient Evidence? I answer, not indeed *universally* and *absolutely*, but they *may* under some Restrictions. Where God hath already blessed a People with a clear Revelation of his own Will, attested by Signs and Wonders, which by their *Nature* and *Quality* may certainly be known to be *divine*, if Men are not wanting to themselves, and will duly consider and preserve a just Memory of them; there I do not see after all that has been said to the contrary, why He may not suffer us to be startled and amus'd by *Seducers*, with some Effects *miraculous* and *supernatural*, with respect to *Human Powers* and *Material Causes*. He may *prove* the Sincerity, Faith, and Diligence of a People by this means; not as some have meanly represented it, to inform *himself* of Men's real Principles and Dispositions, that being inconsistent with his Attribute of Omniscience; but to give his faithful Servants an Opportunity of shining with the greater Lustre, and by their Tryal and unshaken Adherence

Adherence to the Truth against all Temp-
 tations, of meriting a more glorious Reward
 hereafter. This, I say, the Almighty may
 permit for many wise and good Reasons,
 and both *Testaments* give us warning of such
 Occurrences, in passages too often cited
 and too well known to need particular men-
 tion in this place. However we may rest as-
 sur'd in the mean time, and 'tis as certain
 as any Deduction we can make from the
 known Attributes of God, that as this Case
 will in Effect be the same with the former,
 these Miracles of *false* Prophets will never
equal or *obscure* those of the *true*, never *ri-*
val or *imitate* the Splendour and Grandeur
 of the latter, but carry *evident* Marks of a
 limited subordinate Power, by which wise
 and attentive Men may easily distinguish
 them from the *Finger of God*. The Al-
 mighty, we may depend upon it, will al-
 ways so effectually provide for his own *Ho-*
nour, and the Cause of *Truth*, that *his* Mi-
 racles will still continue without Parallel or
 Competition, and *appear* to be unquestion-
 able and uncontrollable Credentials to the
 Messengers from Heaven.

BUT setting aside this Case of a *prior*
 Revelation and *prior* Miracles in support
 of

CHAP. of it, *already* granted to a People, I cannot

II. but subscribe to Mr. *Locke* and other learned Men; who maintain, that if a Man, pretending a *divine* Commission, and appealing to his miraculous Powers for the Truth of it, works openly and publickly undoubted Miracles, and that without any *Controul* or *Opposition*, we may safely receive both *Him* and *them*, as of *divine* Authority. Because it cannot be suppos'd with any shew of probability, that God would suffer his own Name and Authority to be thus abus'd and prostituted to the worst of purposes by Seducers, and such *Supernatural* Testimony to be given to a Falshood, without any *Supernatural* Evidence to the same People on the side of *Truth*. This would be a Snare and Temptation to the Bulk of Mankind, too strong and overpowering for a gracious Being to permit. He would leave them to wrestle with *Spiritual Wickednesses*, without a *proportionable* Manifestation of his own Will and Power, and without sufficient Remedy against fatal Delusions. For to say of the rude unletter'd *Multitude* in a Heathen Countrey, as *Cbina*, *Japan*, *Mexico* &c. that *Reason* should be always their Guide in *Religion*, and by that should they try

try the *Doctrina* of all workers of Miracles, CHAP.
and again by the *Doctrina* prove the worth II.
and Authority of the Miracles, is advice in-
deed right enough and true in the *abstract*,
but to *them* as unsuitable and impracticable,
as if you kindly directed them to do all
this by *Algebra* and *Mathematicks*. The
Darkness, Inattention, want of Leisure and
Opportunities in the Mass of People is such,
as all wise Men(c) acknowledge, and the Ex-
perience of all Ages and Places abundantly
testifies, that to send them to *their* Reason
as a Test of *Religious* Truths, is sending
them to a Guide as *blind* and *fallible* in *Fact*,

as

(c) Statuunt scilicet Viri eximii *doctrina*, ad quam confirman-
dam sunt, *naturam* unicum illam *notam* esse, cujus ope *divina*
miracula ab iis, quæ *cacodamon* edit, segregari possunt. —
Igitur ante quam constituere queat aliquis, utrum *divina* sint,
quæ fieri videt, miracula, necne, doctrina sub examen grave
ac serium ipsi vocanda est, quam miraculorum effector propo-
nit. Quis vero ita *rerum humanarum imperitus* est, ut nes-
ciat, huic examini instituendo non, nisi pusillam manum,
inter mortales sufficere? Nam ut de ipsa rationis nostræ de-
bilitate nihil dicam, opinionum, quibus à teneris imbuimur,
imperium, vis perturbationum animi, quibus subiecti sumus,
auctoritas aliorum, lucri cupido, totq, alia, quæ satis nota
sunt, ita mentem nostram obtundunt et constringunt, ut ea
nobis interdum rationi maxime videantur consentanea, quæ
omnium ei minime conveniunt; et vicissim ea, quæ rationi
et honori Dei præclare favent, prorsus illis contraria et re-
pugnantia. — Idem sine controversiâ a *plerisque* fieret ho-
minibus

CHAP. as any one you can recommend. And 'tis

II. not barely a *Negligence* that occasions this great Defect, but their very State, Condition, Education, and Circumstances in the World, as Mr. *Locke* (d) very justly observes; Which may therefore plead strongly for the singular Compassion and Protection of their heavenly Father. Besides all this, we may presume, that the Subtle Enemy of Mankind would always adapt himself to the *present* State and Notions of a People; the *less* ignorant and corrupt they are, the *less* palpable and shocking, no doubt, would be the Errors or Impurities, to which he would seduce them by his Miracles; that the *Light* of Mens Understandings might never be too great for the dazzling Brightness of his

minibus, qui *mediocri* valent ingenio, errorumque pravitare à primis annis infecti sunt. Porro Viri Doctissimi, si *indifferentia* sint dogmata, neq rationi pateant, tum ipsorum miraculorum magnitudinem unice monent spectandam &c. Ergo nullis rursus profunt miracula, si hoc ita sese habeat, nisi viris perspicacibus et acutis. Namque primo quid *indifferens* sit, Quid non, quid ex ratione probari queat, quid non, id nemo dixerit, ex eorum numero, qui *mediocri* valent acumine nec ullis literis aut artibus instituti sunt. *Populus* ne curat quidem hoc, nedum perspicit. Inter ipsos etiam eruditos; non leves sæpe nascuntur controversæ in hoc genere. *Mosheim*. Annotat. in *Cudworth*. Tom. II. p. 867.

(d) *Locke*. Reasonab. of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 269, 282, Ed. 8.

Wonders.

Wonders. He would certainly propose to CHAP.
the former from time to time, such Doc- II.
trine as he knew they were *disposed* to receive, 
and would appear *plausible*, reserving the
more gross and flagrant Impostures for a sea-
son, when the least *Discernment* and the
greatest *Credulity* prevail'd together. So
that, we may conclude, His Miracles would
always bear down and overrule the Reason
of the Multitude, and lead them captive
into Error and Ungodliness. Because the
Error and *Falshood* of his Doctrine would
never be so *plain* to *their* Understandings,
as the *Truth* and *Greatness* of his *present*
Miracles. And therefore to them, the
Temptation would prove *inevitable* and *in-*
vincible, as the *Evidence* on the side of the
Miracles would certainly *appear* to them
much *superior* to that on the side of the
Doctrine. Neither is there any sort of pa-
rallel, as a late writer has suggested, be-
tween God's suffering *Miracles*, in this Case,
and his suffering *Persecutions* of the true
Religion. The *Temptation* in the latter is
not of the same *kind* or *Force* as that in the
former, the one affecting only the *Passions*,
the other the *Understandings* of Men. *Per-*
secutions do not tempt us into *Errors* in *Judg-*
ment,

CHAP. ment, but into outward *practices* against in-

II. ward *Principles*; they do not act upon us as evidence of Doctrines, but as causes of *natural Evil*, through our passion of *Fear*. So that by *them* we are not properly *deceiv'd*, but overrul'd into Compliances; and in order to resist and overcome them, it is not great *intellectual* Abilities that are requisite, but *Resolution* and *Fortitude*, common to the *lowest* and *highest* of Mankind, to the learned and illiterate. Whereas in the other Case, the Temptation by Miracles operates directly on the *Judgment* of the Men; they appear to them as *Evidence* of *Truth* in Doctrines, and accordingly engage their *Assent* and *Observance*; a People thus corrupt and ignorant, having no sufficient Evidence from *their* blind and weak *reason* against the *Authority* of such Miracles. So that here Men's *Notions* would unavoidably be corrupted as well as Practices, without any Defence or Remedy from themselves against Delusion.

SUCH therefore being the Case of such a People, it is not credible, I think, that an infinitely *Good* and *Holy* Being would suffer *real* Miracles, especially a continued Series of *many* in *Number* and *various* in *kind*, to be

wrought *uncontested* and *uncontroul'd* in fa-CHAP,
your of Seducers. We are not indeed to II.
expect, that God will always provide for
the mere Negligence, Vices and Follies of
Men; But he always will provide suffici-
ently for their natural *Weaknesses*, and for
his own Honour and Glory, against the
Wiles and Artifices of *his* and *our* Enemy
the Devil. So that if Seducers acting by
the Instigation and Assistance of that wicked
one, do really perform Wonders to corrupt
Mankind by *false* Doctrine, we may depend
upon it, that God Almighty has either *re-*
vealed already to Mankind, that Doctrine
which is *truly* his Will, and establish'd it
by illustrious Wonders of his own Power;
or if not, that He will directly confront the
Seducers with his own authorised Messen-
gers, and with new *superior* Miracles in Op-
position to the other. All which is found-
ed *à priori* on the Attributes of God *natu-*
ral and *Moral*, and agreeable *à posteriori* to
certain Fact and Experience through all
past Ages. As to mere *Tricks* and *Juggles*
of artful Impostors, Men have no one to
blame but themselves, if they are not cau-
tious and vigilant enough to escape such
Deceptions. Common Sense and Diligence
will

CHAP. will serve to prevent Impositions of this
 II. kind, and God is no more oblig'd to guard
 us against such in Religion, than in other
 Affairs of Life.

THUS then may you see, *Philaletbes*, what force and Authority belongs to Miracles, how it is they give us Evidence of *Divine Truth*; and what Securities we have against those of Seducers and False Prophets. You may now, if you please, bring out all your treasures of Diabolical Wonders, from *Pagan Romances* or *Popish Legends*, and try whether they ought to have that Influence and Weight with any Body, against the true Evidence of Miracles, which you insinuate. You may tell us strange Stories of *Aesculapius*, *Epimenides*, *Aristeus Proconnesius*, *Hermotimus*, *Simon Magus*, *Vespasian*, *Adrian*, *Apollonius Tyanus*, and forty other such workers of Miracles, collected all ready to your Hand by *Huetius* (e) which I will engage to prove of no Consequence and Significancy against what has been said, whenever the wondrous Tale shall come out. They will be found upon Enquiry, to be either mere *Fables*, or dark and doubtful Relations without proper Au-

(e) *Huet. Quest. Alnet. Lib. ii. cap. xii. and xviii.*

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(f) See Bp.
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 (g) Pocock. S
 (h) Anselm.
 des Inscrip. &
 (i) Freret. D
 (k) Jac. Ser
 1729.

thority: Or extraordinary Events, without any Pretensions or Designs of attesting any System of Doctrines, or a Mission from God (f); such as the Arabians express by the words *Carámah*, and *Istidrjá*, which, as Dr. Pocock (g) informs us, are only Wonders wrought occasionally, the one by good, the other by evil Men, without claiming to themselves the Dignity of Prophets, *ita ut Propheticam sibi dignitatem non vendicent*. Or lastly, if true, and to confirm any false Doctrine, oppos'd or overpower'd by superior Miracles on the side of Truth. This, I will venture to prophecy, will appear at last to be the Case of your wonderful Seducers; and I believe upon considering (besides some of the learned Men abovesaid) *Abbé Anselme* (h), Mr. *Freret* (i), and the very ingenious Mr. *Sercés* (k), who discuss'd this Point professedly not many Years since, you would migh-

(f) See Bp. Fleetwood. Essay on Mirac. p. 221 — 277. Ed. 8vo.

(g) Pocock. Specim. Histor. Arab. p. 186.

(h) Anselm. Dissert. in Mémoires &c. De l'Academ. Roy. des Inscriptions. &c. Tom. IV. p. 399, &c. Ed. Par.

(i) Freret. Dissert. ibid. p. 411, &c.

(k) Jac. Sercés. Traité sur les Mirac. p. 258 — 333. 1729.

CHAP. tily lessen your Opinion of their Works,
 II. and think 'em but puny Triflers in compa-
 W rison of Christ and his *Apostles*.

LEAVING all such therefore to a future Examination, I pass on now to some other little Exceptions and Difficulties, which you start about Miracles. "I must maintain it, "say you, that whatever Certainty God "may convey to a Man's Mind by *Inspi-* "ration or immediate Revelation, the know- "ledge of any such Truth can go no farther "upon *Divine* Authority, or as a matter "of *Divine* Faith, than to the Person or "Persons thus inspir'd; and whoever after- "wards receives it from them, must take "it upon their sole Credit and Authority, "and not upon a *Divine* Testimony or up- "on the Authority of God. p. 82. True, *Philaletbes*, if the Person or Persons thus inspir'd work *no Miracles* in Evidence of their own Inspiration or Mission from God; for then indeed whoever receives any Doc- trine from them, must take it *solely* upon *their* Credit and Authority. But if a Man works *real* Miracles of that *Sort* and with those *Circumstances*, which I mention'd a- bove, and preaches to the World in the Name of God, then whoever receives his Doctrine

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Doctrines will take it upon a *Divine Testi-* CHAP.
mony or the Authority of God, and not II.
solely upon the Credit of the Man himself. 
Because as the *Power*, by which the Man
is enabled to work *such* Miracles, will be
certainly *divine*, so will his Doctrine and
Authority be *divine* too, being directly at-
tested and approv'd by God himself, the Au-
thor of the Miracles; who cannot attest or
approve any Doctrine, but what is true in
itself, and *actually* deriv'd from Him. And
it makes no difference to me, which way
I am inform'd, that a Person is inspir'd and
sent by God, whether by a *Power* in the
Person most evidently *divine*, or by a Voice
to me from Heaven, or by an *internal* Re-
velation to myself, provided I am *certain-*
ly inform'd of it either way; which I should
be by *such* Miracles, as well as by any other
means. So that, by your leave, it is nei-
ther *impossible* nor *absurd*, as you assert,
“for a Man to convey a Truth in *Fact* up-
“on the Authority of God. p. 84. For
here the Inspiration of the Man is a Truth
in *Fact*, and this Truth he may convey to
me or you upon the *Authority of God*, be-
cause he may give us the *Testimony* or *Au-*
thority of God himself for it, in the Mira-

CHAP. cles wrought by the Power of God. And

II. from hence likewise are we furnished with
 an easy Answer to that fallacious *Sophism*
 of yours, when you stoutly insist upon it,
 "That there can be no such Thing, as Di-
 vine Faith upon Human Testimony.
 Which is right enough, if meant of a di-
 vine Faith built solely upon human Testi-
 mony. But 'tis nothing at all to the pre-
 sent purpose, and a mere begging the Que-
 stion. For by Miracles the Testimony im-
 mediately becomes *divine*, and not merely
human; and till you can disprove, what I
 apprehend you will never do, *all* the Force
 and Authority of Miracles, we shall make
 no Scruple to build with the greatest Con-
 fidence a *Divine* Faith upon the Workers
 of them.

How trifling and idle therefore, good
Philaletbes, is your doubty *Parallel*, brought
 in with an Air of wonderful Significancy,
 of a Man, as you put the Case, inspir'd
 with a certain Mathematical Proposition a-
 bout a *Centrifugal* Force; which Man is
 suppos'd to *know nothing of it as a Truth ne-
 cessarily founded in Nature*, but has it re-
 veal'd to him by God, and then proposes it
 as a matter of Belief to some other Person.

Well,

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Well, the Case being thus stated, your CHAP.
judicious Inference is this, "*That he could* II.

"*not convince any other Man not thus in-*
"*spir'd, that he had any such Revelation*
"*from God; but whoever should receive it*
"*from him, must take his own* (you might
have spared the word *own*, because it hurts
the Grammar of the Sentence) "*Word for*
"*it, and depend properly upon his Authority,*
"*and not upon the Authority of God.* p. 82,
83. Truly, I should very much wonder,
if this second Man did *not properly* depend
upon the *other's* Authority, since there is
not supposed in the Case the least Evidence
of God's Authority. But the Parallel is un-
luckily spoilt for want of *that Evidence* in
the Premises; which being left out of your
Case, makes it really, tho' you tell us, it
comes up exactly to the purpose, no more in
truth like the other, than you are to a *Chri-*
stian Jew, for want of the *Jewish* Charac-
teristicks. However your Parallel is not
quite *useless*, tho' it is very lame; for it
serves to shew the Reader, what one would
think you principally design'd by it, *viz.*
Your notable Skill in *Mathematics*, and
Acquaintance with *Keil* or *Sir Isaac*.

CHAP. BUT soon after you come more closely to the Point, and granting, "that a
 II. "number of Men were to work Miracles
 "innumerable, and uncontrollable, openly
 "and in the Face of a whole Countrey;
 "and this not for a Tryal of Skill or
 "Ostentation of power, but for the good
 "of Mankind; and not by any Art or
 "Skill in Magick, but by direct or im-
 "mediate Prayer to God, as a *Testimony*
 "that God was with them, and Preaching
 "the Eternal immutable Rules and Prin-
 "ciples of Moral Truth and Righteous-
 "ness to the World; granting, I say,
 all this, which it must be allow'd is ex-
 ceeding liberal, yet you maintain, that we
 cannot prove them from hence to be both
infallible and *impeccable*, and unless we
 can prove that, all signifies nothing, and
 we have nothing to trust to but the *Moral Truth and Righteousness* of the Doctrines themselves, and where this Evidence fails, we can go no farther. This in short is the Sum of what you urge in p. 92, 93. And here we are to combat again another trite Objection of your favourite Author of *Christianity as Old &c.* repeated in his very words, without the least notice of the

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the solid and distinct Answers so lately CHAP.
return'd to it. A most excellent method IL.

this of improving our Understandings and
advancing Knowledge! But if this *infalli-
ble* and *impeccable* must be answer'd a-
gain, that we might not seem to *decline*
or *suppress* an insuperable difficulty, I say,
that 'tis foreign to the Point, and all a
most sad mistake of the Thing we con-
tend for. You very rightly observe, that
" *Infallibility* and *Impeccability* are the
" sole prerogative and peculiar Attributes
" of God. Pref. p. 9. For taken in their
proper sense, the one implies manifestly
infinite Wisdom, and the other *infinite*
Holyness, which are *perfections*, that can
only belong to the supreme Being. No
one, besides him, is *set above* the *possibi-
lity* of *erring* or *sinning*, and much less
Man with so many Frailties and Imper-
fections. But what does this signify to
the Case in hand? We do not pretend that
by the Power of working Miracles Men
immediately cease to be *Men*, that 'tis *phy-
sically impossible* for them to *deceive* or be
deceiv'd, or that such a Power does *effect*
of itself any *change* in their Qualities or
Capacities. But what we affirm is this,

CHAP. that Miracles are a certain *evidence* to us,

II. that those who work them, do not *actually err* or *impose* upon us in *this Instance*; that they *really* are what they pretend to be, the Messengers of God, and that what they Preach to us in *his Name*, is *truly* his *Will* and *Command*. The Men, you will allow, I hope, *may be right* as well as *wrong*, and *honest* as well as *knaveish*; and then Miracles superadded are to us for the Reasons abovemention'd an external *Testimony* from God, that in their *present* pretensions and Doctrines they are in *fact* both *right* and *honest*. So that in strictness it is not barely the *Ability* or *Integrity* of Men, that we trust to in such cases, but the Wisdom and Goodness of God. Let them be in themselves or their own *Nature* both *fallible* and *peccable*, capable both of *erring* and *deceiving*, yet certain we are to Demonstration that God is incapable of both, that 'tis *impossible* for him to give his Testimony to Errors and Lyes; and 'tis also certain as I have shewn above, that by Miracles *his* Testimony is or *may be* given to those, who are the *visible* workers of them.

AND

AND this Observation will help us to CHAP.
 an easy Solution of another little Diffi- II.
 culty of your's. " So far, say you, as
 " they give us the Testimonial of Di-
 " vine Authority, in the Moral Truth
 " and Righteousness of the Doctrines them-
 " selves, we are oblig'd to believe and re-
 " ceive these Doctrines, and cannot be
 " mistaken; but where this fails (as sup-
 " pose in matters of a *positive* or *ritual*
 " Nature) we can go no farther. — For
 " you cannot see, why we should take
 " them upon *trust* in *some* things, be-
 " cause they have given us very good
 " *Credit* upon others. *ibid.* Why, the
 Answer is *Philaethes*, that here *all* the
 Doctrines, which they preach to Mankind
 in the *Name* and as the *will* of God, are
equally and *indiscriminately* attested by God,
 and must therefore be *all* receiv'd as *com-*
ing from him, and enjoyn'd us *by him*.
 Whatever difference there may be in the
 Evidence arising from the *things themselves*,
 the *Testimonial* of *Divine Authority* is the
 same in all their Doctrines, be the Nature of
 them severally, either *speculative* or *pra-*
ctical, *positive* or *moral*; and they give us
 no better credit in this respect (*viz.* of
 coming

CHAP. coming from God by *supernatural Reve-*

II. lation) for their *Moral Lessons* than any other; and if the Miracles will not prove a Divine *Testimonial* to the latter, neither will they prove it of the former; which yet is a Truth most certain and unquestionable. And if you ask, what Grounds we have for thus depending upon the *Truth* of every Article, which these workers of Miracles publish *as the will* of God; I answer, as I did before, our Grounds are the Wisdom and Goodness of Almighty God, whom I suppose to be the manifest Author of the Miracles. Those Attributes of his would not suffer him *to set his Hand and Seal*, as our *Chillingworth* (1) expresses it, *to the Confirmation of such Doctrine, as is partly true and partly false*; or, in other words, He could not attest that Doctrine in the *gross*, any single Proposition of which is unwarranted by his Authority. Because by so doing, he would *frustrate* in a great Measure the very end, for which his Miracles are wrought *viz.* the Instruction of Mankind in supernatural Truth and his *own Will*, which if blended and interpolated with *Human* inventi-

(1) *Chillingworth*. Pt. I. Ch. III. p. 111. Ed. 4.

ons by his *own* Prophets, and confirm'd CHAP.
promiscuously with the others by Signs II.
and Wonders, would lose that Purity and
Excellency, which, no doubt, He design'd,
should be preserv'd inviolably in the *first*
Publication of them to the World. This
grand Defect therefore, and the many ill
Consequences attending it, his infinite *Wis-*
dom would undoubtedly engage him to
prevent; and his *Goodness* would be joynt-
ly concern'd in it; because otherwise he
might subject and expose Mankind to *un-*
avoidable and *undiscoverable* Impostures by
his own Works and Ministers; which no
one can believe or suspect of the Almighty,
that has tolerable apprehensions of his Na-
ture. And if we rely on him for the
removal of all such Dangers and Diffi-
culties, depend upon it, we are safe, and
need not be *afraid, what Man can do*
unto us.

WHAT particular Methods would be
taken by Divine Wisdom to guard against
Misapplications and Abuses of his Mira-
culous Powers, is not necessary for us to
determine. He *can* do it several ways,
without all Doubt, and some way or o-
ther he most certainly *would* do it. He
might

CHAP. might either so enlighten the Understand-

II. ings and overrule the Wills of his Minist-

W

ers, as to secure them absolutely from Error

and Fraud in the delivery of their Instru-

ctions; or if suffer'd to *prevaricate* and

misrepresent his Orders, he might imme-

diately detect and expose them by raising

up other Prophets with new Powers to

confront and correct them. But whatever

means are us'd by the Almighty for this

purpose, there is *one* infallible mark, by

which it may be known, when these work-

ers of Miracles have *not* actually *falsified*

in any one Point; and that is, the *conti-*

nuance of all their wonderful Powers un-

diminish'd to the last, after *every sort* of

Doctrine, which they solemnly proclaim

to the World, as *divine* Truth. It is

then unquestionably certain, that the *whole*

of such *precedent* Doctrine is what they

pronounce it to be, *i. e.* deriv'd by Revel-

ation from God; it being as inconsistent

with the Attributes of God, to *continue*

such miraculous Powers *unvaried* and *un-*

interrupted to Persons imperceptibly *adul-*

terating his Truth, as to bestow them at

first upon an *absolute* and *total* Impostor:

because from the *subsequent* Miracles he

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must be interpreted to attest a falshood in one Case as well as in the other, which that he never *will* or *can* do, may be taken for granted as undeniable. CHAP. II.

FROM what has been said then, I hope *Philaethes*, it is now sufficiently evident, that tho' Miracles are not *universally* and directly of themselves infallible Evidence of *Divine* Truth, yet in many Cases and Circumstances they certainly are such; and afford us most ample *Securities* for trusting the Workers of them much farther, than your *Moral Truth and Righteousness* would carry us. And from hence we may observe some excellent *Uses* in Miracles for the general Instruction of Mankind, which would be very much wanted and could not be procur'd *without them*. As 1st. The Evidence of Miracles is the *plainest* and most *popular* to confirm a *Revelation*. "If the Principles of *reveal'd* Religion, says Dr. Scott (m) were to be prov'd by natural *Reason* and *Philosophy*, the Arguments of it would be too *thin* and *subtil* for *Vulgar* Capacities, and Men would never be fit to be catechiz'd into their Religion, till they had been train'd up in the *Schools*, and

(m) Scott. Christian Life. p. 575. Fol.

" there

CHAP.

II.

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“there instructed in the Intrigues of *Logic*
 “and *Discourse*; for the *generality* of Men
 “are *capable* of no other Notices of things,
 “but what are immediately impress’d upon
 “them by the Objects of *Sense*, nor have
 “they *Skill* enough so exactly to compare
 “simple *Terms*, as to connect them into true
 “*Propositions*, and from these to deduce
 “their true and natural Consequences, to
 “trace the footsteps of *Truth* thro’ all the
 “*Intricacies* of *Reasoning* and *Discourse*;
 “and this without doubt was one main *Rea-*
 “*son*, why the *Moral Philosophy* of the
 “Heathen had so *little* influence upon the
 “People, because the Arguments by which
 “its Principles were proved, were too *fine*
 “and subtle for vulgar Apprehensions. But
 “Miracles are *Proofs*, which as Objects of
 “*Sense* are *plain* and *intelligible* to all *Capa-*
 “*cities*. “The healing of the Sick, the re-
 “storing Sight to the Blind by a word, the
 “raising and being raised from the Dead,
 “are matters of *fact*, which *they*, says Mr.
 “*Locke* (n), can without difficulty conceive;
 “and that he who does such things, must
 “do them by the assistance of a *Divine*
 “Power. These things lye level to the or-

(n) *Locke*. Reasonab. of Christianity. p. 283. 8vo.

“dinarieft

"dinarieſt Apprehenſion: He that can di-
 "ſtinguiſh between ſick and well, lame and
 "ſound, dead and alive, is capable of this
 "Doctrinẽ. And I aſk now, whether one
 "coming from Heaven in the Power of
 "God, in full and clear Evidence and De-
 "monſtration of *Miracles*, giving *plain* and
 "direct rules of Morality and Obedience,
 "be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of
 "Mankind, and ſet them right in their
 "Duties, than by *Reasoning* with them
 "from general Notions and Principles of
 "Human Reason. I appeal, whether this
 "be not the ſureſt, the ſafeſt, and moſt
 "effectual way of Teaching. I believe,
 there are few, who have conſider'd the
 Nature of Mankind with any ſort of At-
 tention, but would readily ſubſcribe to
 Mr. *Locke's* opinion. Miracles are argu-
 ments ſo obvious, ſtriking and affecting,
 that they force their way into thoſe Minds,
 which would not entertain or hearken to
 abſtract Speculations. They ſpeak Divi-
 nity in a Language irrefiſtible almoſt by
 thoſe, who would never be mov'd by all
 the Philoſophical Harangues in the World;
 and indeed they are the only *probable* means
 of giving that *Reception* and *Effect* to a
 Divine

CHAP. Divine Revelation, and of producing those

II. Advantages to the World, which are the principal End and Design of it.

FOR which way is it likely to remove the Ignorance, correct the Errors, reform the Vices, and to root out inveterate Prejudices, without some incontestible Evidence of *Divine* Authority attending it? Bare Philosophical Lectures upon the *natural Relations of things, and Moral Reasons and Fittnesses*, would be empty, unintelligible, un-affecting Sounds to a People overwhelmed with Idolatry and Superstition; they would not make one Convert in ten Thousand, and perhaps might soon cost the Moralist his Life for Blasphemy against an Idol. Take the whole antient Empire of the *Romans*, and see from thence, how much Truth there is in this Assertion. If such then be the plain necessity of *divine* Authority for that purpose, I would know, what convincing *immediate* Evidence could be given of it, adapted, as it ought to be, to the *Generality* of Mankind, without *Miracles* of one kind or other? It is quite unimaginable, without a particular Revelation to every single Person that wanted it; which is too extravagant and absurd for any Man of Sense to suppose

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suppose or expect. If therefore a super-natural Revelation of *divine* Truth be ever necessary for Mankind, and granted by the Almighty for their *general* Benefit, Miracles will be necessary too, in order to *produce* the intended Benefits of the other in a due Degree and Extent; and they will likewise for the Reasons before mention'd, prove the *best* and most serviceable means for that purpose. Which shews clearly the singular Importance and use of Miracles in this first View, as being the *plainest* and most *popular* evidence of a Divine Revelation.

BUT farther, we may observe 2d. That this Evidence of *Miracles* is the most *short* and *compendious* way of proving the *Truth* of a Religion. "One Reason; says the
"learned Writer abovesaid, why the *Moral*
"Philosophy of the Heathen had so little
"influence on the Vulgar was, because their
"way of proving the Principles of it were
"so long and *tedious*; for they were fain to
"prove them by Parcels, and when they
"had convinc'd their Auditors of the truth
"of one Proposition, they proceeded to a-
"nother; and so they were fain to prove
"them all *singly* and *apart*, by *distinct* and

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CHAP. "different Arguments; which was so tedi-

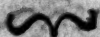
II. "ous a way, that the *Vulgar* had not *leisure*

~ "enough to attend to so great a *Variety* of
 "Reasonings, nor yet *Capacity* enough to
 "retain them. But he that works a real
 "Miracle, in token that such a Doctrine is
 "true, proves it all *at once*, and needs not
 "trouble himself to demonstrate *one* Propo-
 "sition after *another*; for by giving a mira-
 "culous Sign of the Truth of such a Doc-
 "trine, God doth openly approve every
 "Proposition contain'd in it; because it
 "cannot be supposed, that the God of Truth
 "would approve any Doctrine in the *gross*,
 "if any *Part* or *Proposition* of it had been
 "false; since in so doing he must necessari-
 "ly have *abused* our Understandings, and
 "wittingly betrayed us into a *false* Belief;
 "which to affirm of God is equally *absurd*
 "and *blasphemous* (o). And to the same
 purpose Mr. Locke. "The Bulk of Man-
 "kind have not *leisure* nor *Capacity* for
 "Demonstration; nor can they carry a *train*
 "of Proofs; which in that way they
 "must always depend upon for Conviction,
 "and cannot be requir'd to assent to, till
 "they see the Demonstration. Wherever

(o) Dr. Scott. ub. sup. p. 576.

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 "(p) Locke. R



“they stick, the Teachers are always put
 “upon their Proof, and must clear the
 “Doubt by a Thread of coherent Deduc-
 “tions from the first Principle, how long
 “and how intricate soever they be. And
 “you may as soon hope to have all the
 “Day-labourers and Tradesmen, the Spins-
 “ters and Dayry-maids perfect *Mathema-*
 “*ticians*, as to have them perfect in *Etbicks*
 “this way. But as to the worker of Mira-
 “cles, all his *Commands* become *Principles*;
 “there needs no other Proof for the Truth
 “of what *he* says, but that *he* said it. And
 “then there needs no more, but to read the
 “inspir’d Books to be instructed. (p)

How noble and beneficial, *Philaletes*,
 are these uses of Miracles, compar’d with
 that low and jejune one, in which accord-
 ing to you the whole worth and significancy
 of them consists! After lessening the Credit
 and Authority of Miracles, as much as you
 can, you gravely subjoyn a Caution a-
 gainst being misunderstood. “You do
 “not intend to prove from thence, that
 “Miracles are of no use, or can serve to no
 “purpose at all in Religion. Miracles na-
 “turally tend to awaken and alarum Men,

(p) Locke. Reasonab. &c. p. 282, &c.

CHAP. "to take them off from a supine Negligence

II. "and Incogitancy, and to bring them to a

~ "sober and sedate Consideration of the Mat-

"ters thus proposed to them; especially if

"the Miracles are wrought for the good

"of Mankind, and with a visible regard to

"their Interest and Happiness. And this

"Effect the Miracles of Christ and his A-

"postles plainly had upon the People;—

"they disposed them to receive the Truth

"upon its *proper* Evidence or *rational* Proof,

"which was all that they were intended for.

p. 98, 99. No doubt, *Philaethes*, Mira-

cles do naturally tend to *awaken* and *ala-*

rum Men &c. and so far I readily agree

with you; but that the sounding an *Ala-*

rum is the *only* Use, for which they are *in-*

tended at any time, common Sense will not

suffer us to believe; and as to those of Christ

and his Apostles, such a Notion of *them* I

will shew hereafter to be mere Fiction and

Chimæra. But this sort of Language was

formerly introduc'd by some whimsical *En-*

thusiasts among us; who to bring in their

darling *self-evidencing* Light of the Gospel,

as they term'd it, disregarded as mean and

trivial the *external* Evidences of Revelation

by Miracles, and esteem'd 'em like you of

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no other Use but to remove Prejudices, and CHAP.
 raise Attention in the Minds of Spectators; II.
 and by such weak and frivolous Pretences, ~~~~~
 as Bp. Stillingfleet (q) observ'd of them 70
 Years ago, gave great Advantage to Infide-
 lity, inasmuch as by taking away the ratio-
 nal Grounds on which we believe reveal'd
 Religion, and by resting the whole Evidence
 of it on things not only derided by Men of
 Atheistical Spirits, but in themselves such as
 cannot be discern'd or judg'd of by any but
 themselves, we have no Grounds left to con-
 vince an Unbeliever (r). But without en-
 quiring any farther from whom this No-
 tion is deriv'd, let us next examine the
 Truth and Justness of it. Now I say, 'tis
 contrary to Reason and Sense; and the very
 Effects, you ascribe to them, of awaken-
 ing, alaruming, taking Men off from a su-
 pine Negligence and Incogitancy, and bring-
 ing them to a sober and sedate Consideration
 of the Matters propos'd to them &c. do all
 conspire to prove it most evidently. For
 suppose what Being you will to be the Au-

(q) Stillingfleet. Orig. Sac. B. ii. c. x. p. 227, 228. Fol.

(r) Compare a Book entituled, Principles and Practices of
 moderate Divines &c. 1671. p. 54, 55, 56. Dodwell. in
 Rep. Diss. ii. §. 33, 38.

CHAP. thor of Miracles in this Case, that Being

II. would certainly thus *awaken* and *alarum* Men to the *Consideration* of that Doctrine only, which himself *approv'd*, and as such would have receiv'd and propagated among Men; and not to that which he *dislikes* himself, and from which he would *divert* the *Attention* and *Concern* of Men as much as possible. This, I think, is too plain to bear any Question. Well, if so, then Miracles will manifestly *prove* that Being's *Approbation* of the Doctrine, in *favour* and *Recommendation* of which they are wrought. And 'tis the same whether a *good* or an *evil* Being works the Miracles; each will appear by the Miracles to *approve* their several Systems and Ministers. Now suppose once more, that God is the Author of the Miracles, as he certainly *may* be as well as an evil Being, and demonstrably *must* be in certain Cases, as I have shewn before. Admit but the Fact, and it follows of course, that God does likewise *approve* that Doctrine, to which he *awakens* and *alarums* Men by his Miracles. It is for this very reason, that he raises in this manner their *Attention* to it, and *sedate Consideration* of it. And what now is the next plain Consequence but this, that

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that the *Doctrine*, which *He* thus appears CHAP.
 to *approve*, must be *good* and *true*? For I II.
 imagine, you will hardly maintain, that 
 God can possibly *approve* any *Doctrine*,
 that is *evil* or *false* in itself. And if so, then
 Miracles here are an Evidence of *Truth* and
Goodness in those *Doctrines*. And by this
 means at last, your own *Account* and *Use*
 of Miracles, *Philaletbes*, does fairly evince
 that very Point, which you all along so
 stiffly and roundly deny, that *Miracles* may
 be *taken for proper Evidence of Truth in*
Doctrines; and at the same time it effectually
 overthrows and destroys that other wild
 Position of yours, that " *All* they are ever
 "intended for, is only to *awaken* and *ala-*
 "rum Mankind &c. Since by that very
 Act a *farther* Intention of them is openly
 declar'd, and much higher *Uses* implied,
 which a sensible Spectator once *awaken'd*
 could not easily overlook or mistake.

AND now having consider'd every single
 Exception of your's against the Evi-
 dence from Miracles, and that more fully
 I am satisfied, abundantly, than the Strength
 of your Arguments requir'd; I must add
 a few *Strictures* on your Treatment of
Prophecy: I mean of Prophecy in general,

CHAP. without descending to the *Antient* Prophets in particular, whose Conduct and Writings I reserve for another place. But you start a few short Objections against the *general* Evidence from thence to *Persons* or *Doctrines*, which properly belong to this place, and deserve some Notice.

SUPPOSING, " That Prophets foresaw
 " and foretold many things exactly as they
 " afterwards appear'd in fact, you ask,
 " What could this have prov'd, but on-
 " ly, that those Men had the *certain* know-
 " ledge of Futurity in those Matters? And
 " consequently, that these Events were ne-
 " cessary, as depending upon *necessary* Causes,
 " which might be certainly foreknown and
 " predicted. But this, I think, could
 " not possibly have prov'd the Truth of
 " any Doctrines, or the Righteousness of
 " any Persons; and therefore could have
 " been no rational Foundation of true
 " Religion. The Life and Religion of
 " Mahomet and the Pope might have been
 " foretold, as some think they were; and
 " they might have been Prophesied of by
 " unrighteous Men. — But I cannot see,
 " how any of these or other Prophecies
 " can be taken in Evidence of the Truth
 " of

" of Doctrines, or Righteousness of Per-
 " sons. All that Prophecy taken in this
 " Sense of prediction can do, is to acquaint
 " us with something future, that could not
 " otherwise have been known. And here
 " all Prophecy must terminate, and can go
 " no farther. p. 332, 333. Here, *Philaethes*,
 you mistake or disguise in every part the
 Argument, that is usually drawn from Pro-
 phesy. And really there is so much Error
 and Confusion, and so little *pertinent* Truth
 in the whole Passage, that I could hardly
 believe *Philaethes* the Author of it. First
 as to the Doctrines and Righteousness of
 the Prophets *themselves*. It is truly a lit-
 tle strange, that you can draw no better In-
 ference from their *certain knowledge of Fu-*
turity, than that old one of the *Epicureans*,
 reviv'd by some *modern Socinians*; " That
 " these Events were consequently *necessary*,
 " as depending on *necessary* Causes, which
 " *might be* certainly foreknown and predict-
 " ed. As if those Events *alone*, which are
necessary, could be *certainly foreknown* and
predicted, and backwards again, that *all*,
 which are foreknown and predicted thus
 certainly, must of course be *necessary E-*
vents. According to this Hypothesis, either
 Human

CHAP. *Human Actions* must be subjected to in-

II. vincible *Fate* and Necessity, or no Events
 arising from *them* can with you be cer-

tainly foreknown and predicted. And then,

it seems, *Peter's* denial of his Master, the

Persecution and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ,

and the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the

Romans, were either all *necessary* Events and

depending on *necessary* Causes, or else our

Blessed Lord could not *certainly foreknow*

and *predict* those Events. Excellent Prin-

ciples these for a *Christian* and *Philosopher*,

and likely to make terrible havock amongst

us, when the learned World has so long ex-

ploded, and so many Writers have con-

futed them. I shall only recite in Ans-

wer to this Doctrine of your's, what the

late Dr. *Clarke* replied to another *Moral*

Philosopher upon this Head. "God's in-

"fallible Judgment concerning *contingent*

"Truths does no more alter the *Nature*

"of the Things, and cause them to be *ne-*

"cessary; than our *judging right* at any

"time concerning a *contingent* Truth, makes

"it cease to be *contingent*; or than our

"Science of a *present* Truth is any *cause*

"of its being either *true* or *present*. Here

"therefore lies the fallacy of our Author's

"Argu-

“Argument. Because from God’s *fore-*
 “*knowing* the Existence of things depend-
 “ing on a Chain of *necessary* Causes, it
 “follows that the Existence of the things
 “must needs be *necessary*, therefore from
 “God’s *judging infallibly* concerning things,
 “which depend not on *necessary* but *free*
 “Causes. He concludes, that *these* things
 “also depend not upon *free* but *necessary*
 “Causes. Contrary I say, to the Suppo-
 “sition in the Argument: For it must not
 “be first *suppos’d*, that things are in their
 “*own Nature necessary*; but from the
 “Power of *judging infallibly* concerning
 “free Events, it must be prov’d that things
 “otherwise *suppos’d free*, will thereby una-
 “voidably become *necessary*. Which can
 “no more be prov’d, than it can be prov’d,
 “that an Action *suppos’d* at this *present* time
 “to be *free*, is yet at the same time *necessa-*
 “*ry*, because in all past time it could not
 “but be *future(s)*. Thus much against
 your Notion, if Human Actions are *necessa-*
ry according to you, when *certainly fore-*
known by God, and *certainly predicted* by
 his Prophets. But if you deny, that such

(s) Clarke. Remarks on a Philosophical Enquiry &c. p.
 39. 40. Comp. his Demonstrat. &c. p. 106—111. Ed. 5.

CHAP. *Events* as these, being purely *contingent* in
 II. their Nature, can be certainly *foreknown*
 and *predicted*, it is contrary to plain *Fact*
 and *Experience*, as well as the *general* Sense
 of Philosophers. Which I only mention in
 passing, without enlarging on particular
 Proofs, or intending to charge you with
 this Position; Since you expressly suppose
 the contrary at *present*, and are only ac-
 countable for that surprising Conclusion
 from it, which I cited above. But me-
 thinks you might have added another with
 more Reason and Propriety, *viz.* That
consequently, the Prophets foretelling such
 future Events with so much exactness and
 certainty, were *immediately inspir'd* by God,
 and from Him deriv'd their *Supernatural*
 Foreknowledge. For *Prophecies* verified
 afterwards by *Events* of this kind, are con-
 fess'd by all the deepest Philosophers to
 be a certain Evidence of *Divine Revela-*
tion. They are really, as the great Mr.
 Boyle well observes, *supernatural Things*,
 and may properly enough be reckon'd among
Miracles, and such as on the Score of their
Duration and *permanency* have a peculiar
Advantage above most other *Miracles*. And
 when we see such unlikely *Predictions* actu-
 ally

ally accomplish'd, it may well convince an **CHAP.**
 unbiass'd Man, that the Authors of them **H.**
 were really endued with a truly Prophetick 
 i. e. a divine Spirit (t). And the reason of
 it is, that such amazing Predictions of re-
 mote contingent Futurities, are far beyond
 the reach of *Angelical* as well as *Human*
 Sagacity. For whatever be the Subtlety,
 Agility, and Penetration of superior Intel-
 ligences, by which they may foresee and
 foretell many things unknown to Men,
 whose *Causes* are already in *being*, or which
 they themselves *design* to effect, or which
 are now in *agitation* and *concert* among
 Men, and near a final Execution; yet other
 Events there are, the Prediction of which
 cannot with any Reason be imputed to any
Natural Presaging faculty of theirs. Such
 for Instance, as are distant many Years or
 Ages from the Prediction itself, and depend-
 ing on *Causes* not so much as *existing* when
 the Prophecy is given, and likewise upon
 various circumstances and a long arbitrary
 Series of things, and the fluctuating Uncer-
 tainties of Human Volitions; and especially
 such, as depend not at all upon any exter-
 nal Circumstances, nor any Created Being,
 but arise merely from the *Councils* and *Ap-*

(t) Boyle. Christian Virtuoso. p. 99, 100.

CHAP. pointment of God himself; such Events I

II. say as these, can only be foreknown by that Being, whose Attribute is *omniscience*, and foretold with exactness by Him alone, to whom the *Father of Lights* shall reveal them (u). So that whoever is manifestly endued with that Power, must in *that Instance* Speak and Act by a *Divine Inspiration*, and what He pronounces of *that kind*, must be receiv'd as the *Word of God*. As to the *Personal Righteousness* of Prophets, that is another Point, which this miraculous knowledge does not evince directly of itself, nor is it urg'd as a certain Argument of it. We may presume indeed *generally*, that those whom the Almighty favours with such extraordinary Gifts, and employs in the Discharge of that solemn Office, are Men of extraordinary Integrity and *Holiness*; that the Conduct and Character of their Lives might answer in a suitable Degree to the Dignity of their Office, and the Lustre of their Powers. And thus in fact has the *divine Spirit* of Prophecy been visibly accompanied for the *most* part with great Virtues and Ex-

(u) See Cudworth. Syst. Intellect. p. 866 — 879. Ed. Mosheim. Vitrina in Isai. Cap. XLI. p. 415. Tillot. Vol. III. Sermon. 187.

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cellencies in the Men, who were endowed CHAP.
with it(w); but it neither produces nor cer- II.
tifies them to us infallibly; and if this Con-
fession, *Philaletbes*, will give you any plea-
sure, I believe there is no one amongst us
that will envy or oppose it. And I am sure,
the Evidence from Prophecy as to the Pro-
phets themselves, or at least all that we con-
tend for, is still very safe and insuperable
without higher Claims.

BUT you quite amaze me with your o-
ther Article, in which you would invalidate
the Argument from Prophecy, with respect
to *Persons* or *Doctrines predicted*. There
you tell us, that "you cannot see, how Pro-
phcies can be taken in Evidence for the
"Truth of Doctrines, or Righteousness of
"Persons, because forsooth the Life and
"Religion of *Mahomet* or the *Pope* might
"have been foretold, as some think they
"were. Here you allude, 'tis plain, to the
Christian Argument drawn from the *Jewish*
Prophecies in favour of *Jesus Christ* and
his *Religion*; and by this most acute and
elegant Observation about *Mahomet* and the
Pope, our whole Hypothesis, it seems, as

(w) See *Smith* of Prophecy. Ch. viii. *Vitrina* Obser-
vat. Sac. L. VII. c. 3.

CHAP. to that Point, is to be overthrown and destroyed at once. *Istuc est sapere!* Why, one would think, you never had bestow'd one Thought on the Nature of our Argument from Prophecy in this respect; so wretchedly and shamefully is it here represented to the Reader. *Mahomet* and the *Pope*, say you, might as well have been foretold as *Jesus Christ* and his Gospel, therefore Prophecy is no better Argument for the latter, than it might be for the former! Very possibly indeed, *Philaletthes*, according to your Account of the thing; but pray, who inform'd you, that the whole Strength of our Argument lies here in the bare foretelling? Or, what *Christian Jew* among us ever asserted, that *Persons* would appear to be righteous, or *Doctrines* to be true, merely because they were foretold? For my part I'm an utter Stranger to such Men. And the Truth is, you dress up the Argument in a Form of your own, and then would make us answer for the ridiculous Weakness and Figure of it. We do not infer the Righteousness of the Blessed *Jesus*; or the Truth of his Doctrine barely from their being foretold by antient Prophets; nor is that the true Point indeed, for which we alledge

the

the Prophecies. The first thing intended to CHAP.
 be prov'd from thence, is the particular II.
Quality or Character of his *Person* as the
 promised *Messiah*, and that of his *Doctrine*
 as the promised *New Law* and *New Cove-*
nant of the Prophets, in both which all the
 great Promises and most illustrious Predic-
 tions in the Old Testament were to termi-
 nate, and receive their grand Accomplish-
 ment. This we urge against the Jews, who
 will not receive either *Jesus* or the *Gospel*
 under that Character; and so far, as Chri-
 stians, we are necessarily concern'd for *Pro-*
phetical Evidence; since the Honour of our
 Lord and the Excellency of his Gospel is
 very nearly affected by it, and dependent
 upon it, as will be shewn hereafter. But
 the *Righteousness* of his Person, or the *Truth*
 of his *Doctrine* in the *Abstract* is not argu-
 ed from thence *alone*; that might have been
 prov'd by other Evidence without any *Pro-*
phesy at all; and *with it*, is still establish'd
 on *proper and distinct Evidence* of its own;
 and whatever *additional Evidence* it receives
 from *Prophecy*, is not deriv'd from *Prophecy*
as such, but from Prophecies of a certain
kind, representing the *Messiah* as *Righteous*,
Holy, *Just* &c. and his *Doctrine* that, by

CHAP. all Corruptions and Errors in Religion should

II. be purg'd away, and *the Earth be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.* And then *consequentially* only do they prove thus much of *Jesus* and his *Doctrine*, as *He* is the very *Messiah*, and his *Doctrine* that excellent *Law*, which they *foretell* and *characterize* in this *Manner*. What is this now to *Mahomet* and the *Pope*, *Philaethes*? It is true, both or either of them might have been *foretold*, and perhaps they were under the Name of *Antichrist*, the *Man of Sin and Perdition*. But must *Prophecy* therefore by *our* Argument give Evidence to the *Righteousness* of their *Persons*, or the *Truth* of their *Doctrines*, as well as to that of *Jesus Christ*? Really I should have but a poor *Opinion* of that *Man's Head or Heart*, who either *could not* or *would not* distinguish better, when every *Book* upon this *Subject* would teach him another *Lesson*. It is plain and obvious to every one, that, as the *Characters* under which each of these is represented by *Prophecy*, is widely different, so the *Evidence* from *Prophecy* to the *Quality* of each would be different too, tho' all had that single circumstance in common, of be-

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ing foretold. If Mahomet and the Pope are CHAP.
foretold in Scripture, they are foretold un- II.
der the Characters of *Deceivers* and *Anti-*
*christ*s, and as such the Scripture therefore
directs us to reject and abhor them. So like-
wise was Judas pointed out by the ancient
Prophets, but he was thus pointed out in
the odious Form of a *Traytor*; and in this
respect only did the Prophets bear witness
to the Wretch. On the other side, the *Mes-*
siab is represented by the Prophets under
the noblest and most beautiful Images, as
the *Light of Nations*, the *Prince of Peace*,
the true, faithful, beloved Servant and Mes-
senger of God, to whom the *Gentiles* should
seek, and *Israel* should hearken. There-
fore Jesus, who appears to be that *Messiah*,
is also the true and faithful Servant of God,
in whom he is well pleased; and as such, are
we taught by the Prophets, to love, honour,
believe, and follow Him. So various and
contrary is the *Testimony*, which you see, is
here given by the Prophets to different Per-
sons, tho' they do indeed agree in all so far,
as to foretell every one of those Persons.
And from hence it will be evident, I hope,
to the Reader, what is the Nature and Force

CHAP. of our Argument from *Prophecy*, and how
 III. little it is affected by your *Animadversions*.

W I proceed no farther in the Subject of
Prophecy at this time, as considering it only in *one View*, of falling in with the *external Evidence* of a *Divine Revelation*; which Evidence, I hope, by this time is freed sufficiently from those *Obscurities* and *Difficulties*, with which our good *Christian Deists* endeavour to cloud and embarrass it.

CHAP. III.

Of Traditional Revelation; the Certainty with which it may be convey'd to After-Ages; and the Nature and Extent of Divine Faith founded upon it.

IT is not to be wondred, that those, with whom even an *original Revelation* would gain so little Credit by all its *miraculous Evidence*, though the whole were *present* to their Senses, and publick to all, should still have less Faith in one, the *Evidence* and *Doctrines* of which are convey'd to them only by the Testimony or Relation of other Men. And I am therefore not surpris'd in the least to find you, *Philaethes*,
 fo

so doubtful, and suspicious, and averse to CHAP.
this latter; it being natural enough for the III.
Men of your Turn, to distrust and despise
all Pretences of this kind, and to rely on
no Mortal's Understanding, Senses, and Ho-
nesty but their own. And thus you very
freely represent the Defects and Uncertain-
ties of such *Revelation*, and how incapable
it is of producing a rational *Divine Faith*,
or carrying a *Divine* Authority along with
it. You see no Reason or Obligation upon
us to receive any *Book* of this Character as
coming from *God*, nor any Grounds for de-
pending on a title in it, but where the *Mo-
ral Truth, Reason, and Fitness* of the thing
appears; and even there you conform to it,
not because that *Book* commands or teaches
the thing, but because your *Reason* approves
it as *true* and *good*. So that in short, you
can pay no more Respect and Obedience to
it, than to *Aristotle's Ethics*, or *Tully's Of-
fices*. You take just so much of it, as you
like for its *Moral fitness*, and discard the rest,
as *no matter of Conscience* at all. This in
truth, as every attentive Reader must per-
ceive, is the Drift and Purport of your Do-
ctrine; and how it agrees with the Name
and Character of a *Christian*, will be shewn

CHAP. hereafter. In the mean time let us hear

III.  your formidable Arguments against us. In the first place to make the very Idea of a *traditional* Revelation as mean and despicable as possible, in your *Stile* it is only, "What our Forefathers believ'd and taught" about God and Religion. p. 85. A mere *Oral* Tradition, I suppose, like that of the famous *Siamese* God *Sommonocodom*, descending from Father to Son, without any clear Foundation, any authentick Memoirs, or even any *written* Accounts from *Forefathers* themselves, of what they did *believe* and *teach* thro' every Age. Such is the dark, uncertain *Tradition*, which seems, *Philaletbes*, to be intimated in those Phrases of yours; and upon such I for my part never desire to build either *my* *Divine* Faith or yours. But is this then the *best* and the *only* Tradition you can give us, and must all be cramp't and curtail'd into those little barren Expressions, of *what our Forefathers believ'd and taught about God and Religion*? Indeed, *Philaletbes*, both you and all Men of Wisdom and Learning know much better. For suppose but the Fact of an *original* *Divine Revelation* once deliver'd to Mankind, you may easily conceive, I hope, that

that the Laws and Doctrines of that Reve- CHAP.
lation may be *written*, as well as any Civil III.
Laws or Philosophical Doctrines; and *writ-*
ten in those very *times*, in which they were
first publish'd to the World, and by those
very Persons, that publish them by God's
Appointment. You may likewise conceive,
that even the *miraculous* Works which *at-*
test and *prove* the Divine Revelation, may
also be *recorded* in Writings by the *same* Per-
sons, and in the *same* Times. And it is not
more difficult to suppose, that all these Wri-
tings containing the *original Evidence* and
Substance of that Revelation, may be as
safely and *clearly* transmitted down together
to succeeding Ages, as the *Civil* Laws of
Rome, or *France*, or *England*, or any other
Records and *Books* whatsoever. Now then
let me ask you or any other Man, whether
all such *Writings*, convey'd in this manner
to succeeding Times, would amount to no-
thing more, than a bare *Tradition* of *what*
our Forefathers believ'd and taught about a
preceding *Revelation*? Should not we stare,
and pronounce a Man out of his Wits, or
an *Ignoramus*, that would seriously insist
upon it, that as to the *Statutes* of *Henry*
the VIIIth or *Q. Elizabeth*, we only know

CHAP. by *Tradition*, what our *Forefathers* believ'd
 III. and taught about them? Or should a modern
 Civilian talk just in this way of *Justinian's Institutes*, or a Roman in *Cicero's Days* of their *Laws of the Twelve Tables*, would not all the Learned immediately smile, and ask what He meant by *Tradition*, and what their *Forefathers* believ'd and taught? For have we not all these *Laws* in our hands at present, as well as our old *Forefathers*, in the same Form and Language in which they were written originally? Where is the Sense then of running to a bare *Tradition*, and referring us wholly to the *Doctrine and Belief* of our *Forefathers* concerning 'em? You need but consult our *Archives* and *Libraries*, and there you may see the *Laws* themselves, and be satisfied. Now 'tis evident, that just the same Reply with at least the same Propriety and Reason may be given to a Man, who will needs use this sort of Language as to *Laws Divine*, deriv'd by a former *Revelation* from God, and convey'd to Posterity in the manner abovemention'd. For what should hinder the *Code*, in which such *Laws* are contain'd, from being preserv'd, and read, and follow'd as well as the others? And why must the whole Authority

thority of it be dwindled into *what our* CHAP.
Forefathers believ'd and taught, if their Suc- III.
 cessors have plainly before them, the same
Text and Rule to instruct them, which their
 Ancestors had? Whether in fact, there be
 any such *Code of Divine Laws* existing,
 thus *written and convey'd* down to us of
 these times, is another Point, to be confi-
 der'd afterwards; I would only shew in this
 Place, that such a Book of *reveal'd Divine*
Laws is very possible, and that your Ac-
 count of a *Traditional Revelation* is a very
 crude and defective one.

BUT from hence you go on to shew us
 the great Insufficiency and Uncertainty of
 it. "Whether, say you, they (our Forefa-
 "thers) ought to have believ'd as they did,
 "or whether their Reasons will hold good
 "or not, is another Question, concerning
 "which your Tradition and Human Testi-
 "mony can never inform you. *ibid.* Very
 true, *Philaletbes*, that is indeed another
 Question; for Tradition will certainly not
 inform us of these Matters, nor is it expect-
 ed by us that it should. All that we desire
 from it, is only to inform us clearly, *what they*
our Forefathers were exhorted or required to
believe and practise, and what arguments or
 means

CHAP. means were really us'd for their Conviction.

III. The true Question therefore is, whether this *Tradition* or *Human Testimony* can so convey to us by Records or History, both the *Doctrines* and *Evidences* of their reveal'd Religion, that we of succeeding Times may unquestionably be furnish'd with the same *Grounds* and *Objects* of Faith, which were offer'd to our Old Forefathers at the beginning. So that if *they* were right in believing a certain System of *Reveal'd* Religion, upon certain miraculous Facts confirming it, we who have plainly in our Hands by Human Testimony, the very same System of Religion, and the same kind of *Facts* laid before us, should be right in believing as they did, and under a strict Obligation to do so, as well as they. This, *Philaletbes*, is the only true Question between us here; and by it you may observe, that *Tradition* or *Human Testimony* is to us in after-Times, what *Eyes* and *Ears* were to those of the First. It conveys and notifies to us, those *Signs* and *Wonders*, and those very *Doctrines*, which our Predecessors saw openly perform'd, and heard distinctly Preach'd to Mankind by God's Prophets or Apostles; and this not in *Legendary Fables* of Modern



dern Date, compos'd by obscure and uncertain Authors, and many Generations from the first Appearance of those Preachers and their Works, but written in that very Age, and either by themselves or their immediate Disciples, and with all the circumstances of Credibility imaginable. It is such *Tradition* and *Human Testimony*, that we are contending for, and the Use we would make of such Writings transmitted down to us, is to inform us, as I said, in *fact*, what were truly the *original* Doctrines of the Divine Revelation, and what were the *Proofs* of its being such. But *whether our Forefathers ought to have believ'd as they did*, and whether we ought to follow them in their Belief, is a Point, of which this *Tradition* can no more inform *us* properly speaking, than the *Eyes* or *Ears* of our Old Forefathers could inform *them*: It was not their *Senses*, that decided this Point with *them*, nor is it any *Human Testimony* that can do it with *us*; but 'tis *Reason* both in *them* and *us*, that judges of the *Motives* and *Objects* of Faith presented to each in such different ways, and determines upon them, how *they* and *we* ought to act in the Case.

BUT

CHAP. BUT still, it seems, "we can only be
 III. "probably assur'd by this Tradition, of what
 ~~~~~ "is deliver'd down to us thro' this Channel.  
 "ibid. Pray, *Philaletes*, let us know, what  
 is here the meaning of the word *probably*.  
 Must we take it in the *vulgar* or *philosophi-  
 cal* Sense? which all Men of Learning know  
 very well, are two Senses very different from  
 each other. In the latter, *probable* signifies  
*indemonstrable*, *unscientific*, not prov'd  
 like *Mathematical* Propositions, where the  
 Ideas under consideration have a *necessary*,  
*constant*, *immutable* Connection with one  
 another. But 'tis a great mistake to imagine,  
 that therefore it immediately implies *Uncer-  
 tainty* and *Doubtfulness*. For all past Mat-  
 ters of *fact*, and a Thousand other Truths  
 are in this Sense *probable*, which yet are ma-  
 nifestly so far *certain*, as to admit of no  
 Doubt or Dispute; and we assent, as Mr.  
*Locke* well observes, *as firmly to them, and*  
*act as resolutely according to that Assent, as*  
*if they were infallibly demonstrated* (x). Thus  
 it would be only *probable* to one unacquaint-

(x) *Locke*. Hum. Underst. Book IV. Ch. xv.

*Bayle*. Philosoph. Comment. p. 337, 338.

*Wollaston*. Relig. of Nat. p. 55 — 59.

*Dr. Waterland*. Importance &c. Ch. V. p. 183. &c.



ed with Mathematicks, that any Proposition in *Euclid* was true, though all the Geometricians in the Royal Society were solemnly to assure him of it. And thus it is only *probable* that the *Sun* will rise to Morrow, or that *St. Paul's* will stand secure for one Day. And thus as to Matters of Fact, it is only *probable* to me, that any such Cities exist in *France* or *Italy* as *Paris* or *Rome*, or any such Countries in the *East* or *West*, as *China* or *Peru*, or that ever such Princes reign'd in *England*, as *William* the Conqueror or *Henry* the V<sup>th</sup>, or that ever such writers liv'd upon Earth as *Cicero* and *Plutarch*, or that ever such a change in Religion happen'd in *Europe*, as the great *Reformation*. For *Human Testimony* here is all my Evidence for it, and *that* can give me no strict *Demonstration* or *Infallibility*. But yet I doubt no more of these things, than I do of my Writing at present. Suppose therefore *Human Testimony* and *Tradition* to be so far *probable*, it may then create an *indubitable Assurance* in me or you of the Thing convey'd to us by it. And if so, the Authority of it will become *unquestionable*, tho' Philosophers give it the name of *probable*. But on the other side, if the word *probably*

is

CHAP. is here to be understood in the *vulgar* Sense,  
 III. meaning, as it generally does, *doubtful, pre-  
 carious, obscure*, and the like, you take for  
 granted a Point, which no Man of sense ever  
 can or will allow. For why must all *Hu-  
 man Testimony* be doubtful as to this Fact on-  
 ly of a *Divine* Revelation, when it *may* be  
 and is universally allow'd to be as to others  
 very clear and unquestionable? Both the  
*Evidence* and *Matter* of a Divine Revelati-  
 on, I have shewn above to be as capable of  
 being *thus* convey'd, as any *History* or System  
 of *Civil* Laws whatsoever. Nay consider-  
 ing the Nature and Ends of a Divine Reve-  
 lation, it may have Arguments *peculiar* to  
 itself, if it really is such, to evince a much  
 greater certainty in the *Testimony*, whereby  
*that* is convey'd, than any other Facts or  
 Books can pretend to. For suppose a Re-  
 velation to be once publish'd to the World,  
 and establish'd upon incontestible Evidence  
 of *Divine* Authority, and design'd by God  
 for the instruction and observance of *future*  
 Generations as well as the *present*, we may  
 then be assur'd, that a particular Providence  
 of God will attend and secure its convey-  
 ance to Posterity; that After-ages may have  
 no *just* Reason to doubt either of the *Evi-  
 dence*

dence or Substance of it. On the other side, your way of arguing will end in this manifest Absurdity; That notwithstanding a Divine Revelation were really publish'd to the World in *one* Age, and that both the Evidence of its divine Authority were registred immediately, and all the Laws and Doctrines of it digested into Books by those Persons, who by God himself were empower'd to Work the one and to Preach the other; and notwithstanding this very Revelation were design'd for *succeeding* Ages no less than the *present*, and convey'd down to those Ages in the Writings abovemention'd, under a particular Providence, and with as great certainty at least (I may say, *greater* beyond comparison) than any other Books, Records and Laws whatsoever; that yet it would all signify but little, we should only be *probably* assur'd of it, and could not receive or depend upon it as a *matter of Conscience* or *eternal Salvation*; because it comes down upon *Human Testimony* and *Tradition*, which however *unquestionable* it be in other Cases, is in this for that reason only very *doubtful* and *suspicious*. Will common Sense and Modesty bear such Reveries as these? Or can that be allow'd by any wise Man to be



CHAP. be a just Objection against the Belief of a pretended Revelation, which would equally hold against one suppos'd even true *a priori*? What is this but declaring in other Words, that I will not believe a Revelation, which comes to me as a past Matter of *Fact*, tho' it carries with it all the Evidence in the World, which a Matter of Fact can have, and tho' I do believe a Hundred other Facts of Consequence even upon *less* Evidence, purely because it was publish'd before I was Born, and is not prov'd to me in the way I desire? If a Man will be thus resolv'd against Conviction, He must e'en be left to himself, and enjoy the blessed Comforts of such a *Reason* and such a *Conscience*.

HOWEVER you insist upon it, "That Human Testimony, by which even an original divine Testimony or Revelation may be convey'd to Mankind, is liable to Error. p. 84. I grant it is liable to Error, i. e. capable of Erring, as to a Physical possibility; and so it is, not only in this, but in all other Cases whatsoever. But then it is also as evidently and confessedly true, that all Mankind do not err in fact, and that all Human Testimony is not actually false, and that Men in hundreds of Instan-

ces

ces trust as securely to it, as if it were perfect *Demonstration*. The great *Hooker* saw it necessary long ago to enter such a caution, "that "Infinite Cases there are, wherein "all impediments and lets are so manifestly "excluded, that there is no shew or colour, "whereby any exception may be taken, but "that the *testimony of Man* will stand as a "ground of infallible (*i. e.* indubitable) Assurance(y). If this be true, as 'tis certainly the Sense and Practise of the wisest Philosophers, why must we reject all *Human Testimony* in this Case, only because 'tis *liable to Error*, when every Body admits and acts upon it readily in other concerns of Life? What do all our *Civil Rights* and *Properties* depend upon constantly, but *Human Testimony*? What are *Charters*, *Deeds*, *Patents*, *Registers*, and *Records* of all sorts, but so many *Human Testimonies*? How are ten Parts in twelve of the People of *England* assur'd of the *Common* or *Statute Laws* of the Realm, but by *Human Testimony*? Nay, how do our Judges themselves and the whole Body of Lawyers know any thing of *Old Acts* of Parliament, enacted many Years

(y) *Hooker*. Eccl. Pol. Book II. §. 7. Comp. B. III. §. 8.

CHAP. before they were born, but from the same

III *Human Testimony?* If we go from hence to  
 the learned World, we may see that the  
 same Authority runs thro' all. For what  
 are the ancient Histories of Greece, Rome,  
 &c. but *Human Testimonies*? And yet we  
 reason, and build upon these in *certain* Cir-  
 cumstances, as indisputable Matter of Fact.  
 And it would even be judg'd ridiculous Fol-  
 ly and Madness to scorn and discard all  
 these at once, for no other Reason, but be-  
 cause in a strict Philosophical Sense they are  
*liable to Error*. Such an Objection as this  
 is founded on nothing but a bare *Physical*  
*possibility* of Deception, and lies equally a-  
 gainst a *thousand* Witnesses as *one*, against  
 the *wisest* as well as the *weakest*, against the  
*best* as well as the *worst* of Men; and would  
 therefore if pursued thro' all its consequen-  
 ces, confound all distinctions of Evidence  
 from *Men*, and introduce as to Facts an uni-  
 versal Scepticism (x). Whereas 'tis grant-  
 ed on all hands, says *Le Clerc*, that there  
 "are *certain Characters*, whereby we often  
 "know, whether a Fact be true or not, and  
 "distinguish a false History from a true

(x) See this whole Matter excellently stated and discuss'd  
 by Mr. *Dutton*, on the Resurrection of Jesus. Part II.



one (2). There are certain Rules, by which we proceed in judging of Human Testimonies viz. the Integrity and Ability of Witnesses. And where both these Qualifications concur, especially in a very great Number of such Witnesses, there is no just and rational Ground of Doubt and Suspicion. We have all the Satisfaction and Evidence in the Case, that can be desir'd as to Facts, and nothing but extravagant Humour and Obstinaey can withhold our Assent. And hence it is, that even the Naturalists themselves, those professed and diligent Searchers after Truth, allow the greatest Weight to Human Testimony even in Philosophical Enquiries. This Mr. Boyle calls vicarious Experience, to distinguish it from that which is personal or our own, and he says, There will need but little Reflection on what is judg'd reasonable, and freely practis'd by Philosophers themselves, to justify this extent of the word Experience and his Proposition laid down before, viz. That we ought to believe divers Things upon the Information of Experience whether immediate or vicarious, which without that Information, we should judge

(a) *Le Clerc: Causes of Incredul. p. 284.*

CHAP. "unfit to be believ'd, or antecedently to it

III. "did actually judge contrary to Reason (*b*).

And thus do the foreign Philosophers depend in many Instances on the Reports and *Transactions* of our *Royal Society*, as ours in return do on them, where the Skill, Honesty, and Accuracy of Persons are unquestionable. Thus does Sir *Isaac* himself (*c*) rely *wholly* on the Testimony of travelling Philosophers, for a Difference in *Fact* of the Length of *isochronous* Pendulums, about the *Equator*, and several *Latitudes* from it. And thus do Astronomers depend on the great Dr. *Halley*, for a Catalogue of Southern Stars, which they never saw themselves in their Lives. We are also inform'd of amazing *Phænomena* of the *transient* kind, which are admitted by the Moderns without any Scruple, tho' they never were and perhaps never will be Spectators of one of them. Such for instance, are those of *new* Stars appearing and disappearing at certain Times, with a gradual Increase or Diminution of Brightness and Magnitude, and fix'd in *Appearance* to the same Point

(*b*) *Boyle*. *Christ. Virtuoso*. p. 60, 67.

(*c*) *Newton*. *Princip. Lib. III. Prop. 20* p. m. 418-421.

of the Heavens (d). Of this kind was that seen by *Tycho Brahe* in the *Chair of Cassiopeia*, and a second by *Hevelius* in the *Breast* of the *Scorpion*, and a third by *Bullialdus* in the *Neck* of the *Whale*, and more by others. Besides all which, how many strange and surprizing things in Nature are daily believ'd without the least Hesitation by inferior *Virtuosi*, on the sole Credit and Authority of their Superiors? Who is there among them, that doubts of *Jupiter's Belts*, or the wonderful *Ring* of *Saturn*, or of the *Order* and *Periods* of the *Satellites* revolving round each of those distant Planets? And yet I suppose, not one in fifty of those, who believe these *Phænomena*, ever actually observ'd and traced minutely, the different *Phases*, *Positions*, and *Courses* of these several Bodies; but absolutely depend for the truth of all on such eminent Men as *Cassini*, *Huygens*, &c. Who again doubts of prodigious *Spots* generated and dissipated on the *Body* of the *Sun*, equal in real Extent, as many assert, to all *England*, or e-

(d) See *Keil. Lect. Astronom. VI.*

*Whiston. Præl. Astron. V.*

*Derham. Astro-Theol. B. IV. Ch. 3.*

*Lowthorp. Abridg. Voi. I. p. 247, 251.*



CHAP. VII. *Europe* itself? Yet how few are they, who have had the Opportunities of beholding them, and owe not their *whole* Knowledge about them to the *Eyes* and Reports of others? The same Observation might be extended to numberless Experiments, relating to the Qualities of the Loadstone, the Spring of the Air, the Reflection and Refraction of the Rays of Light, which serve to evince many Truths in fact, not only *new*, but exceedingly *paradoxical* and *improbable*, and even as Mr. Boyle (e) confesses, *irrational to be believed, were it not for this Human Testimony*.

I have dwelt the longer on these Subjects; to shew that *Philosophy* is not such an Enemy as some may imagine, to the belief even of *Wonders* upon bare *Tradition*, together with *Curiosities* innumerable. And I may add from the same Mr. Boyle, "That on this kind of *Historical* Experience, consisting of the Personal Observations of *Hippocrates*, *Galen* and other Physicians, transmitted to us, a great Part of the practice of *Physic* is founded. And Physicians reduce these and the like Matters of

(e) Boyle. Considerat. about Reason and Religion p. 75, &c. Christ. Virtuosa. p. 62. — 67.

“*Fact* to *Experience*, as to one of the two CHAP.  
 “*Columns* of *Physic*, as distinguish’d from III.  
 “*Reason*. For this purpose, no doubt, it was, that so many curious and extraordinary Cases in *Physic* and *Anatomy* were registered by our *Royal Society*; which would all be of little Use, and trifling in a great Measure, if no one might believe and trust them but *Eye-witnesses*.  
 To apply then, what has hitherto been said; since it is plain beyond dispute, that *Human Testimony* alone, tho’ liable to Error in the Abstract, is in so many Cases admitted as *clear and undoubted Evidence* of past Matters of Fact, we may justly conclude, that *Human Testimony* may likewise be *clear and undoubted Evidence* of *Facts* and *Books* relating to *Religion*, as well as those of *Physic* or *Philosophy*, and ought likewise to determine our Judgment and Practice with the *same* Degree at least of Assurance and Regularity. For these are *sensible Facts* as well as the other, and however they may differ from ordinary *Facts*, in the *Rarity*, and *Strangeness*, and particular *Uses* and *Ends*, are still as certainly to be known, as any the most common *Facts* whatsoever; and may therefore be as fully and strongly

ORAT. attested by Spectators as any other. They  
 III. may also be recorded in Books (excuse the  
 repetition) with the same exactness and fi-  
 delity at least as any other; and those Books  
 may be convey'd down to the following Ge-  
 nerations, with no less certainty than those  
 of Cicero, Pliny or Galen are to us, or those  
 of Boyle, Newton, and the Transactions of  
 the Royal Society to future Ages. So that  
 however possible it may be for this Human  
 Testimony to err, yet we may be sure, it  
 does not err, in one Case as well as in the  
 other. I set the Credit and Authority of it  
 here at the lowest, to shew upon this State  
 of the Case, the little Reason or Sense there  
 is in boldly neglecting and disclaiming it  
 in Religious Matters, as a thing deserving  
 no Care and Attention, because liable to  
 Error; when at the same time in other im-  
 portant Concerns of Life, Men of all Ranks  
 and Professions give it so much Weight and  
 Authority. Nor is this a Conduct arising  
 from any Foible in Mankind or Error in  
 Judgment, but, as many have explain'd at  
 large, and a small Degree of Reflection  
 would convince us, founded in the very  
 Constitution of our Being, and the Nature  
 and Exigencies of Human Affairs. And  
 were



were we hardy enough to act otherwise, the consequent Mischief and Confusions in the World, would soon exemplify our Folly, and compel us to change our Measures. Let us therefore hear no more of *liable to Error* in *Human Testimony*; it is an Objection, that proves *too much*; and if sufficient to take away from us a past *divine Revelation*, it should then be carried as far as it would go, and will end in destroying our Civil Happiness; and the greatest part of our Learning. But the grand insuperable Difficulty of all, in which you are mightily elated and triumph over all the *Divines*, is yet behind. You say, that "Because all that Human Testimony, by which even an original *divine Testimony* is convey'd to After Times, is *liable to Error* or fallible, therefore that *divine Testimony* itself or divine Revelation cannot be convey'd as a Matter of a *Divine Faith*. There can be no such thing, you assert, as a *Divine Faith* upon *Human Testimony*; It is a mere *absurd Supposition*, and what not. p. 84. And such a prodigious Advantage and Power do you fancy to yourself in this Argument against us, that you cannot forbear expressing your joyful Expectations, that the

" *Lazety*

CHAP. III. *Laiety* will all immediately *despise* and *laugh* at what the *Clergy* have hitherto call'd *Divine Faith*. p. 434. But we hope better things, *Philaletbes*, when the *Laiety* come to be inform'd, that you, who are to bring this Contempt upon us, do not really so much as *understand*, what it is which the *Clergy* of this Church have hitherto call'd a *Divine Faith*. It is plain, that a *Faith divine* with you is a *Faith infallible*, built entirely from beginning to End on *infallible Evidence*; and from thence comes the flagrant *Absurdity* you talk of, in *divine i. e. infallible Faith* on *Human i. e. fallible Testimony*. Now who would not presently imagine by your Representation of the *Clergy* and their *Doctrine*, that the Notion of *Divine Faith* abovemention'd, belongs to the *English Clergy* in general? But 'tis all a gross Mistake. It is chiefly the Principle of the *Romish Divines*, which they in all their Disputes with us have warmly espoused, and stickle everlastingly for with the greatest Zeal. And their Aim in it was to prove from thence the necessity of a standing *Infallibility* in the Church; and for this purpose have they constantly utg'd it against us from *Knot* the Jesuit to *John*

*Jabu Serjeant*. But our Divines, as *Chil- CHAP.*  
*lingworth* (f), *Land* (g), *Stillingfleet* (h), III.  
*Tillotson* (i) &c. have all as vigorously op-  
 posed it, and disprov'd the Notion with the  
 greatest clearness and solidity imaginable.  
 But at the same time some Divines among  
 our *Protestant* Dissenters, with much bet-  
 ter Views indeed, tho' as little Success, un-  
 warily adopted it into *their* Systems, and  
 accordingly were soon rebuk'd for it with  
 equal Candor and Judgment by the inge-  
 nious *Dr. Puller* (k), and the Author of  
*Principles and Practices of Moderate Di-*  
*vinity* (l); the former of which, as he speaks  
 professedly the Sense of the Church of *En-*  
*gland*, deserves to be heard with particular  
 Attention. "In giving a Reason of our  
 "Hope, and in convincing ourselves or o-  
 "thers of the Truth of Matters of Faith  
 "and Christian Doctrine, our Church doth  
 "not insist upon *such* kind of Certainties,

(f) *Chillingworth*. Relig. of Prot. Ch. II, III, VI.

(g) *Land*. against Fisher. p. 102, 103, 107, 110.

(h) *Stillingfleet*. Prot. Resolut. of Faith. Chap. V, VII.

*Vindication*. &c. Ch. II.

(i) *Tillotson*. Vol. II. Sermon. 168. Fol.

(k) *Puller*. Moderation of the Church of England Ch.

VII. §. 8.

(l) *Principles and Practices* &c. p. 58 — 64.



CHAP. III. as others without Reason do exact. The Point of Certainty is a nice Step, which is taken in the first consideration of Religion, and of great Consequence; wherefore we cannot but observe the great Moderation, and Care of our Church.

1. RESOLVING the first Motive and Reason of *believing*, into the Testimony of God only; submitting all rational Enquiries unto the *Divine* Testimony, when once there is assurance, that the same Testimony is *Divine* &c.

2. OUR Church doth accept and use such *rational* Evidences, as God hath given us, as the means of being assur'd of the Certainty, that the *Revelations* which we receive as *Divine*, are such: Because the *Divine* Testimony is not *immediate* to us, nor necessary it should be so, but is convey'd to the Assent of the Understanding by some *proper* and *just* Evidence &c.

3. OUR Church no where makes *infallible* Certainty of Assent, a necessary Condition of Faith: it being sufficient to make our Faith *certain*, if our *Rule* be *infallible*, and that applied with *Moral* Evidence, that is, such an Evidence as

we

"we can have of Things and Actions past, CHAP.  
"as is sufficient to guide and govern our III.  
"Manners and Behaviour.

"SOME of late have contended (with  
"very ill Success) that an *infallible* Cer-  
"tainty of Assent is *necessarily* wrought by  
"Demonstration (and what they love to call  
"scientific Evidence) in every Believer, —  
"Others there are who deliver, that an in-  
"fallible Certainty of Assent, wrought on-  
"ly by the immediate extraordinary Ope-  
"ration of the Spirit of God, is *necessarily*  
"in every true Believer — Which preca-  
"rious Presumption tends to render useless,  
"all those *sufficient* Evidences we have of  
"Divine Truth, by the gracious means  
"which God hath appointed *ordinary* in his  
"Church; and whereas the Assertors of this  
"extraordinary Spirit, exclude all other  
"Means of real Certainty as *insufficient*, such  
"a Doctrine being *false*, must needs tend  
"also to overthrow all *Christian* Religion.

"SUCH is the sad Consequence of the  
"Doctrines both of Dr. J. O. and Mr. J. S.  
"in making (tho' on different Grounds) an  
"*infallible* Assent necessary to a true Be-  
"lief.

"THEY

CHAP. III. "THEY agree together also in the Injury they do Christian Religion, by traducing our Faith, as a *probable, fallible, human, natural* Faith, which is grounded on such *Evidences* as God hath abundantly afforded us, to assure us of the Truth of his *Divine* Testimony — And thus we may discern how many are led to *Popery*, by the way of *Embuliasm*. For it is usual for those into whose Head *Embuliasm* is blown, to reel from one *Extream* to another (m).

WHAT think you now, *Philalethes*, or what will the *Laiety* think of your general Charge upon the *Clergy* about an *infallible divine* Faith? Instead perhaps of *despising* and *laughing at us*, they may smile at your small Acquaintance with our Sentiments, and frown too at your rash Attempts to mislead their Understandings, and misemploy their Passions.

BUT how then, you will ask, can our Faith which is allow'd to be *fallible* so far as tis founded on *Human* Testimony, be ever a *divine* one with any propriety? Why the answers, that were given to our *Romish* Adversaries, will serve for you. This term,

(m) Puller. ub. sup. p. 141 — 146.



you must know, of *divine Faith* was introduced at first to express the Difference between that *Faith* or *Assent*, which Men give to the *Word* or *Testimony* of God, and that which they give to the *Testimony* of Men (*n*). I speak not here of *Faith* in general, which in a more enlarg'd Sense is a *Persuasion* of the *Mind* concerning any thing (*a*), and may arise several different Ways, either from *Sense*, or *Experience*, or abstract *Reasoning*, as well as from *Authority* or *Testimony*. But I consider now that particular kind of *Faith*, which arises from the last of those Ways *viz.* *Testimony* or *Authority*. As to which, that *Faith* which is grounded *merely* and *solely* on the *Testimony* of *Man*, is call'd *Human Faith*, and that which is grounded on the *Testimony* of *God*, is call'd by us *Divine Faith* (*p*), taking this Name from the principal *Argument* or *Medium*, by which it is produc'd in us, *viz.* a suppos'd *Divine Declaration* or *Attestation* of the Thing believ'd. So

(\*) See *Stillingsfleet*. Vindicat. of Protestant Grounds of Faith. Ch. 2. p. 356. &c. 8vo.

(b) See *Tillotson*. Vol. II. Sermon. 165. Fol.

(c) See *Pearson* on the Creed. Art. I. p. m. 4. 5.  
*Tillotson*. Rule of Faith. Part. I. Sect. 1.

that

CHAP. that tis necessary indeed, that *divine* Faith  
 III should be *ultimately* founded on some *divine*  
 W Testimony or Authority, otherwise it could  
 not be *divine*, nor distinguish'd from *Human*;  
 all the *Human* Testimony in the  
 World *alone*, being absolutely insufficient to  
 give it that Name and Character. But it is  
 neither essential to this *divine* Faith, to be ab-  
 solutely *infallible* with regard to us who are  
 the *Subjects* of it, nor is it inconsistent with  
 its Nature to be *primarily* founded on some  
 intermediate *Human* Testimony. *Infalli-*  
*bility* is known to exclude all *possibility* of  
*Error* and *Deception*. And thus *God* by  
 his infinite Wisdom is absolutely *infallible*,  
 and any *Revelation* from Him, any *Word* or  
*Testimony* of his, that is really and *infallibly*  
 such, is *infallible* likewise: but there is no-  
 thing in the Nature of *divine* Faith, which  
 requires such an absolute *infallibility* in us;  
 the *Word* *divine* in this Case not denoting  
 any precise *Degree* of *Assurance* in the Per-  
 son *believing*, but only the *Object* and *Founda-*  
*tion* of it, viz. the *Testimony* of *God*. Nay  
 tis evident, that it may and *must* admit of  
 many various *Degrees*, from the various  
 Tempers, Capacities, and Circumstances  
 of *Believers*; all which *Degrees* are incom-  
 patible

patible with *Infallibility*, that being *one and uniform* with itself, and admitting of no *Degrees* in Assurance. But still the *Faith* of all these Believers may have the same grand *Foundation* of the whole, and be denominated from it, viz. the *Word* or *Testimony* of God; and be properly *divine*, tho' the *Testimony* of God is known and ascertained to each in different *Ways* and *Measures*. It is true, if we are once *infallibly* assured of the *Word* or *Testimony* of God, then may our *Faith* in that particular *Word* or *Testimony* of God be *infallible* too, because we have *infallibly* the *Testimony* of Him, who is and must be *infallible*. But this, however desirable, or *actually* attainable it may be in *some* Cases, is not to be expected in *all*; nor is it necessary by any means to the very *being* or *Form* of the *Faith* we speak of. It is sufficient abundantly for that purpose, if we are really *assured* of a *Divine* Revelation or *Testimony*, beyond all reasonable Grounds of Doubt and Distrust; if we are *actually* as *certain* of it, as we are of any thing without us by our Senses, or any past Fact by History. For where I have no just Reason or Ground to doubt of a *Divine* Revelation, there I have no just Reason



CHAP. son to *question* the Testimony of God in  
 III. that Revelation; and consequently as I *ra-*  
 tionally may, so in Duty I *ought* to believe  
 that Testimony of God, and my *Faith* will  
 then be *divine*. From hence it may ap-  
 pear, that *Divine* Faith does by no means  
 exclude all *Human* Testimony. It cannot  
 indeed rest *entirely* and *finally* upon it, but  
 it may, by the Help of that as an *Instrument*  
 of *Conveyance*, be led up to the knowledge  
 of that *Divine* Revelation, in which it ter-  
 minates. This you, *Philaletbes*, in a quib-  
 bling equivocal way are pleased to call a  
*Divine* Faith upon *Human* Testimony; as  
 if truly, because it *sets out* at first upon *Hu-*  
*man* Testimony, therefore it *ends* in that  
*alone*, without any thing *Divine* to support  
 it. And by the same way of arguing, if a  
 learned Physician should cite the Testimo-  
 nies of *Galen* or *Hippocrates*, or a Lawyer  
 that of *Selden* or Lord *Coke*, you might as-  
 sure them, their *Faith* was founded not at  
 all upon the *Testimony* of those great Men,  
 but merely upon that of *Librarians*, *Tran-*  
*scribers*, or *Printers*. For 'tis thro' *their*  
*Hands* such Works are transmitted to Him,  
 and *his* Faith must be founded on the *Te-*  
*stimony* of those, from whom he receives  
 those

those Books immediately, not properly on the eminent *Authors* of them. And such will be the Fate of all in the next Century, who might venture to rely on any eminent Writers of this time in *History, Philosophy, Physic, Divinity* &c. Their Faith will set out upon the *Testimony* of those, who preserve and deliver such Writings into their Hands, and there it must end too, if this sort of Reasoning be good; for make but the distance of Time the same, and the Argument will always be *equally* strong at least, both in *Human* and *Divine* Faith. For if a Book, which has God originally or his *inspir'd* Minister for its Author, becomes a mere *Human* Testimony tho' *Divine* at first, by passing to me thro' the Hands of Men in any Number of Years; then any other Book, which has some particular Man as *Grotius, Selden* &c. for its Author, will in the same Number of Years from the Author's Decease *cæteris paribus* become no longer the *Testimony* of Him who wrote it, nor could we depend upon it as *such*, but the whole must be resolv'd into the Testimony of those who transmit them to us. And thus should we at this time o' Day cite that honest *Historian Thuanus* against

CHAP. the Popish Party, a Jesuit might tell us,  
 III. we had no such thing as the *Testimony* of  
 ~~~~~ *Thuanus*, but only that of some *Printers*  
 and *Booksellers*. What then would become
 of his *Authority* 500 Years hence? Now
 I believe the World would be little inclin'd
 to this sort of *Doctrine* in mere *Human*
Writers; and if Men would but think and
 act consistently, they would relish it as lit-
 tle in *Divine*. They would see and not
 scruple to acknowledge, that a Book con-
 taining the *Reveal'd Will* of God, and
 clearly of *Divine Authority* at first, might
 easily be convey'd down thro' several Cen-
 turies with so great Evidence to the last,
 that still it might continue and appear of
 the same *Authority* as at first, and owe no-
 thing more to succeeding Men but *Copies*
 and *Conveyance*. In which Case, what
 should hinder, *Philaethes*, the *Faith* of the
latest Generation in that Book from being
Divine, as well as that of the first? And
 yet such is the very Case of *Divine Faith*
 in *Traditional Revelation*, and no other, that
 we propose and are now sincerely contend-
 ing for. But as I am sensible, that this *Tra-*
ditional Evidence to *antient Books* of *Di-*
vine Authority is not so clear and satisfacto-

ry to every Reader, as it may be to those CHAP.
 who can trace it thro' every Century back- III.
 wards up to the first, let us place ourselves W
 at the Head in the very Days, when such a
 Divine Revelation is publish'd to the World,
 and carry it downward to Ages succeeding
 that of our's, and survey the Evidence of
 it arising to each, corresponding in a suit-
 able Degree to that particular *Revelation*,
 I shall mention hereafter; and then the
 Reader will judge the better of the force
 of all your Objections, as to *Human Testi-*
mony, in the several Periods of Time.

SUPPOSE therefore a number of Men
 were to rise up at this Day in *Holland*, with
 a Power of working the most astonishing
 Miracles, various in kind, and many in
 Number, *openly* and *publickly*, before all
 sorts and Degrees, and Professions of Men,
 to heal the Blind and the Lame, the Deaf
 and the Dumb, and in short all sorts of Dis-
 eases the most confirm'd and inveterate, by
 a Word, or a Touch, and to raise even the
 Dead to Life; and were to go on acting in
 this wonderful Manner, Month after Month,
 and Year after Year; and that we in *En-*
gland were every Week to receive full Ac-
 counts of all that pass'd from our Friends

CHAP. and Correspondents, and even to hear the

III. same from the Mouths of several Persons of

known Probity and Ability, who declar'd

themselves frequent Eyewitnesses to these

very Miracles, and perfectly satisfied with

the Truth of them; nay farther, to be assur'd

of the same from those, who had actually

experienc'd the beneficial Effects of those

Powers, by an immediate and perfect Cure

of their own Distempers. What should

we do in this Case? Could we possibly

doubt and dispute these Facts, which were

daily ringing in our Ears, and attested from

time to time by the most credible Authori-

ties? I really believe, no Man in his Wits

could seriously doubt the Truth of them:

Or if he could, he might doubt as well and

as rationally, whether there be in *Holland*

any such Towns as *Leyden* and *Amsterdam*,

if he never saw them himself, or any such

Ruling Magistracy there as the *States Ge-*

neral. Here then is *Human Testimony*, that

certainly *does not err* in Fact, however *lia-*

ble to Error it may be. Now suppose a-

gain, that these extraordinary Workers of

Miracles were to Preach a certain System of

Doctrines as *reveal'd* to them by Almighty

God, and by Preaching to gain abundance

of

of Disciples and Followers, and even to communicate the same Miraculous Powers to those Disciples, and to send them abroad to propagate the same Doctrines throughout the whole Country, and all the adjacent ones. And that one or more of these Disciples, were to write a particular Narrative of the principal Actions of these their Masters, and a full Account of the Doctrines, which both they and themselves now Preach to the World; and that numerous Copies of both their Writings were immediately dispers'd in *Holland*, and transmitted from thence to *England*, and were universally allow'd to be Written by those very Persons, whose Names they bear, and likewise to be true and faithful Accounts both of the *works* therein mention'd, and also of the *Doctrines* Preach'd at that time in all Parts by the new Evangelists, without any Contradiction from any Quarter. I ask now, who among us in *England*, that was fully apprised of all these particulars, could doubt, whether those new Books or Writings were penn'd by the Authors abovemention'd, or whether they were true and Authentick Narrations of what they contain'd? If any one could, he might doubt as well, whether

CHAP any other Book publish'd in *Holland* under
 III the Names of *Le Clerc, Burman, s' Graves-*
 W and *&c.* were genuine, or any one Fact in
 all our Philosophical Transactions were
 true. But if he could not, as I think com-
 mon Sense and Experience would not suffer
 him to do, then here we have *Human Testi-*
mony again, as *certainly unerring* as before,
 and leaving no Room in the Mind for Dis-
 trust or Suspicion. And consequently, if
 the Circumstances both of the Doctrine and
 Miracles be such, as that the latter shall most
 evidently prove the *divine* Origin and Au-
 thority of the former, then we who have
 thus in our Hands a written *unquestionable*
Account of both, have likewise an *unquesti-*
onable divine Revelation communicated to
 us, as well as those who saw the *same* Mira-
 cles with their own Eyes, and heard the
same Doctrines from the Mouth of those
 Preachers themselves. From whence it
 follows, that *we* as well as *they* should be
 oblig'd to *believe* and *obey* this Revelation, if
 directed to Mankind in general, because *we*
 no more than *they* should have any *just Rea-*
son to disbelieve and reject it, as to any Un-
 certainty in the *Evidence* or *Matter* of it.
 And farther, if we did believe it to *come from*
 God,

God, our Faith would be no less *divine*, than CHAP. the Faith of the first Disciples; because it III. would be founded ultimately in the Testi- mony and Authority of God, tho' it took its first Rise from Human, but unquestionable; Testimony. Being therefore clearly advanc'd thus far, let us now suppose, that many thousands of Men are converted to this Religion in a few Years, even before the Decease of those first Preachers, and that after it Thousands were continually added to the Number in different parts of Europe; and that Hundreds of Copies of the Writings above-mention'd were gradually dispers'd abroad into various Hands; and that time after time many of these new Converts were to write Defenses or Illustrations of their Faith against Unbelievers; not to vindicate the Truth of the Miraculous Facts upon which they ground their Faith, nor to prove to their Adversaries the Genuineness of the Books containing it, these being Points agreed and uncontroverted of all Sides; but either to shew the great Excellence of their new Religion beyond any other in the World; or to obviate some gross Misrepresentations, either of their Faith or Practice, or to clear some Article of their Religion from Cavils and

CHAP. and Difficulties, or to Correct some false
III Notions and Interpretations of it among
 their own Brethren; and farther, that all
 along many large Quotations and Extracts
 were made by successive *Apologists* from
 their sacred Book, and Comments by se-
 veral others upon it; and that the Works
 of many of these Writers were convey'd
 down together with many antient Copies
 of that Book, to a Generation 300 Years
 distant from the present, with the same
 Degree of *Perspicuity* and *Evidence*, with
 which any other Books of *Law*, *Physic*,
Philosophy, or *History* are convey'd to it.
 Upon this state of the Case, I ask now,
 what *reason* would our Successors living at
 that time have to doubt of the *Miracles* and
Doctrines abovemention'd? They might see
 very plainly, by various antient Copies, and
 numerous Quotations of different Writers,
 that the History of the one and the Account
 of the other was the same exactly with those
 now extant in our Time. And consequently,
 might see as plainly, that *they* have the same
Revelation for the *Object*, and the same *Rea-*
sons from the *Miracles* for the *Grounds* of it,
 that we their Predecessors have at this Day.
 And if so, would find themselves equally
 oblig'd

oblig'd in reason to believe its divine Authority, with those who liv'd 300 Years before them. For what should make any great Difference between *them* and *us* in point of *Obligation*, when no very material Difference appears in point of *Evidence*? At least, they would have a *sufficiency* of Evidence and Motives to believe as we did before them, and no just Grounds for doubting the Truth and Authority of this Revelation. And the same would be the Case of any succeeding Generation, provided the *Human Testimony*, by which the Books above-mention'd are convey'd to it, be clear and unquestionable. For then let this Generation be placed at what distance you please from the present, either 500, or 1000, or 1500 Years, yet so long as the People of that Generation may be sufficiently assur'd in the same way with the former, past all reasonable Doubt, that the History and Doctrine of this original Revelation deliver'd down to *them*, is the very same in Substance with what is now extant and in use with *us*, they likewise may still be as certain of the *Divine Authority* of that Doctrine, as they could be of any *Fact* or *Book* at the same distance of Time, and their Faith

THAT Faith in it as well as ours may be truly
III. *divine*, because resting on a manifest *Divine*
Authority. And I would ask any serious
 considerate Man, what should hinder or ex-
 cuse that Generation in such Circumstances,
 from assenting firmly to the Truth of such
Traditional Revelation? Would the bare
 Plea of *Human Testimony being liable to Er-*
ror be admitted as sufficient to justify their
 Unbelief, when they may see and know if
 they please that it *has not err'd*, but *actu-*
ally put into their Hands that very *reveal'd*
Religion, and laid before their Eyes that
 very *Evidence* of it, which every Century
 before them quite up to the present enjoy'd?
 I am much afraid, it would not. For those
 who are furnish'd with an *Evidence* of
 God's *reveal'd Will*, *sufficient* to produce
 an indubitable *Assurance* of it, tho' it be
 not the fullest and highest *Evidence possi-*
ble, must certainly be oblig'd to regard and
 follow it, and would act against the genuine
 Dictates of right unprejudic'd *Reason*, if
 they did not.

THUS much then to shew, that as it is
 the Nature of *Divine Faith* to be founded
 on some evident *Divine Authority*, so it
 will remain *Divine*, by what means soever
 that

that *Divine* Authority is made known, CHAP. III.
 whether by the Testimony of our Senses,
 or the credible Reports of Eye-Witnesses,
 or unquestionable History. And that *Hy-*
man Testimony as such, when used only as
 a means for the Discovery of the *Divine*,
 does not at all obstruct or interfere with it,
 but then only, when 'tis really *doubtful*,
 and not to be depended upon with Prudence
 and Security.

HOWEVER tho' a Man in this way of
Tradition may receive very good and incontestible
 Evidence of God's *reveal'd* Will, by
 having before him the Writings of those very
 Persons to whom he *reveal'd* it, yet as the
 certainty from it is not quite equal to that
 from *Demonstration* or *Sense*, you would
 truly advise him to sit still and take no manner
 of Notice of it, but wait contentedly,
 till God shall either *speak to him in Person*,
 or favour him with some *brighter* Evidence
 of his Pleasure. And this, you tell him,
 He may do very safely, without the least
 Danger of incurring the *Divine* Displeasure;
 and to prove it you usher in another *Parallel*,
 which for Aptness and Propriety far excells
 the former about a *Force centrifugal*. It
 runs in these words, "Suppose you were

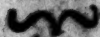
CHAP. III. to write to another Person, and he to a
 third, and the third to a fourth, and so
 on to the hundredth or thousandth Hand,
 which Orders were at last to come to your
 Family, as a Matter of Command and
 Direction from you, about something of
 near Interest and Concern between you and
 your Family: Might they not upon such
 an occasion reason thus; if the Master
 and Father of the Family had intended a-
 ny such thing, might he not have spoke to
 us in Person, or have sent his Orders di-
 rectly under his own Hand and Seal, which
 we are perfectly well acquainted with,
 and which he has always instructed us to
 regard and trust to? And therefore what
 Reason can there be for his sending an
 Order of such Consequence in this indi-
 rect and roundabout Way? Besides, here
 appears to be nothing in the Nature of the
 Command itself, that can induce one to
 believe, that ever it came from our Father
 or Master. Here is a great Stress laid up-
 on things, which do not seem to concern
 his Interest or ours; He has often warn'd
 us to beware of such Deceptions; we can-
 not depend upon all the Hands, thro'
 which this has been convey'd to us, and
 there-

“therefore we will suspend our Obedience *Chap.*
 “and Actions upon it, till we know more *III*
 “of the Matter, and hear in a more direct *W*
 “and unexceptionable Way from the Master
 “of the Family, which will be as soon as
 “he himself pleases. And in the mean
 “while we know, that he is too much con-
 “cern’d for us, and has too much *Wisdom*
 “and *Goodness* to leave us long in the Dark
 “about it, and to make us suffer any Thing
 “under such a Doubt or Perplexity. Now
 “I beseech you, could you blame your Chil-
 “dren or Servants for *this*? Would you
 “punish the Family for not obeying your
 “Orders, whether they are *probably* or *ra-*
 “tionally convey’d or not? Or would you
 “not rather approve and reward them for
 “such a *prudential* guard against Imposition
 “and Deception, pag. 88, 89, 90.

W H Y truly, *Philaetbes*, as you put
 the Case, I see no Fault in the Conduct of
 your Children or Servants; they act with
 that degree of Caution and Discretion, and
 with that Regard to their Father or Master,
 which is not only blameless, but deserving
 both Applause and Reward. But surely
 you are too well acquainted with the *Rela-*
tions and *Fitnesses* of things, to think this

CHAP. a real Parallel to the Case of *Traditional*

III. Revelation; convey'd in the Manner and



for the Uses abovemention'd. For there is not in reality the least Resemblance, not a single stroke of similitude between them; and had you given any Eyes or Brains to your poor *Christian Jew Theophanes*, he must have rallied you smartly for this ingenious Parallel of your's; and triumph'd over it exceedingly. But you wisely took care of yourself in the Dialogue, and made the poor Man too blind to discern any Fallacies here, however palpable and obvious to common Understandings. To be satisfied of which, let us only take a cursory View of both Cases, and observe how exactly they tally. 1st. Your Master or Father in the first Instance sends his Orders to his Family in this roundabout Way, without speaking to any part of it himself, or ever attesting his Orders by *Hand and Seal*. But God in all his Revelations does at first speak directly and immediately to some of his *Servants* or *Children*; and then for the Satisfaction of others sets his *Hand and Seal* to his Orders in a Way most proper for Him and the most unexceptionable of any, by his Gifts of *Miracles* and *Prophecies*,

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Prophecy. So here we separate very fast at our first setting out. In the next place, your Family does not receive the original Orders themselves of their Father or Master, either in his Hand, or in that of his known *Amanuensis*, or in any authentic Copy, but only a general Report or account of 'em from the last Man in your long Series of Writers, upon whose sole Credit and relation the Family must wholly depend for the Truth of them. But now in *Traditional Revelation* as stated above, we do not rely on a bare Representation of God's Will from those immediately before us, but we receive it in the very words of God's Agents and Ministers, employ'd by him to publish it to his Servants both by word and writing; and we take it from the very Original Manuscripts of those Preachers and Penmen, if we live in the early Times of this Tradition; or, if later, from unquestionable Copies of those Originals, containing the Evidence and Substance of the former Divine Revelation. Again 3dly. Your Father or Master transmits his Orders to his Family by a number of Persons writing one to another, who are all either Strangers or not belonging to the Family; but in the other

CHAP. Case God transmits his Orders by *one* Part
 III. of his Family to *another*; by those of his
 ~~~~~ Servants or Children who receiv'd them di-  
 rectly from himself, to those at a distance in  
*Place* or *Time*; and these latter again com-  
 municate the same to others in the original  
*Form* and *Stile* thro' succeeding Ages, to-  
 gether with *Testimonies* of every *preced-*  
*ing* Age to the Authority and Genuineness  
 of those very Orders deliver'd in the *la-*  
*test*. To which add, *4th*. That in the *Nature*  
 of the *Command* itself, there appears no-  
 thing that can induce your *Children* or  
*Servants* to believe, that ever it came from  
 their Father or Master. But is *this* to be  
*suppos'd* as the real Case of every *Tradi-*  
*tional* Revelation, when you allow your-  
 self, an *Original* Revelation may be other-  
 wise, *i. e.* excellent and beneficial in its  
 Doctrines and Commands? For what an  
*original* Revelation may be in *Nature*, that  
 a *Traditional* may surely be likewise, since  
 both may be *one* and the *same* in *Nature*,  
 as the latter is only the first *pres-*  
*erv'd* and *communicated* to succeeding A-  
 ges. So that here are committed two very  
 sad Faults, the one in taking for granted  
 as *true*, what may certainly be *false*, or at  
 least

least in dispute; and the other, in making  
 that an Argument against *all Traditional*  
*Revelation*, which is only of force against  
 one *kind* of it. And lastly to compleat the  
 Disparity, your Children or Servants are *in-*  
*structed* by their Father or Master to *regard*  
 and *trust* only his *Personal Orders*, or those  
 under his *visible Hand and Seal*; but God has  
 never given to Mankind any previous *Instru-*  
*ctions* to *regard only immediate Revelation*,  
 and to scorn or distrust all *Traditional*. Or if  
 he has, you'll extremely oblige us by discov-  
 ering, when or where such Instructions were  
 deliver'd. In the mean time you fill us  
 with Wonder at the exquisite Skill and  
 Beauty of your *Parallels*, where you hard-  
 ly preserve one similar Feature throughout  
 the whole. And what is still worse, had  
 you drawn a much truer likeness between  
 the two things, than you have in fact, there  
 is such an Impropriety and even Absurdity in  
 the Comparison, that your Argument from  
 it against the Belief of Traditional Revela-  
 tion would be stark nought, and conclude  
 nothing against it. You compare a little  
 private Family, compris'd perhaps in a  
 single House, and actually subsisting at  
 one time with a Father or Master at the



CHAP. head of it, to one over which presides the

III. Almighty, of equal Extent perhaps with the habitable Globe, and *successive* in time

by Nature from Generation to Generation, some Parts of which rise not up into *Existence* till many hundred Years after others.

And from the manner of instructing and governing the former, observ'd as *reasonable* and *proper* by Fathers or Masters, you

would needs forsooth regulate the Conduct of God towards all his Servants or Children; than which (to use the softest Expression) a more wild and chimerical Thought cannot well be conceiv'd. For consider only,

what a wide difference in Measures such a vast Disproportion between the two Cases must of course introduce. *Fathers* or *Masters*

may give their Orders directly to *every Part* of their Family in Person, if *present*; and no other way would be so *convenient*

and *natural* as this. But God cannot speak directly to every Child or Servant of his without a *Miracle*, or *supernatural* Manifestation of himself and his Will. And must

he therefore produce as many Miracles of this sort, as he has Children or Servants in the World, in all *Times* and in all *Places*?

This would be such a profusion of miraculous

lous



ious Revelations, as would be highly unbecoming the Majesty of God, and unsuitable to the present State and Condition of Mankind. For then we must suppose what is quite irrational to suppose, that even the most prophane and obstinate Unbelievers, those who reject with Scorn and Derision all tenders of Grace and means of Salvation, those who ridicule *Revelation* itself, and perhaps deny the very Being of a God or Providence, shall enjoy this extraordinary Favour in common with the *best* of Men; and that too, when God foresees it would be confer'd upon them in vain, and meet with no better reception, than that of being treated with Neglect and Contempt, as either merely the Effect of natural Causes, or Melancholly, or a Dream, or a disturb'd Imagination. Add to this, that the very Supposition of such immediate Revelations to every Man would fill the World with continual Impostures and Delusions. For as an excellent Writer (g) well observes, "if every one had a particular Revelation made to himself, every one might pretend to others what he pleased; and we know from the Example of the Pro-

(g) *Jenkin. Reasonab. &c. Vol. I. p. 19.*

CHAP.

III.



pher, who was sent to prophecy against  
 "the Altar of *Bethel*, that a Man may be  
 "deluded by the pretence of a Revelation  
 "made to another, against an express Reve-  
 "lation made to himself; and we may con-  
 "clude, that this would often happen, from  
 "what we every Day experience; for if  
 "Men can be perverted by the *Arts* and  
 "*Insinuations* of others, against their own  
 "Reason and Judgment, they might as  
 "well be prevail'd upon to act against a  
 "Revelation made to them, though Re-  
 "velations were as common and familiar  
 "amongst Men, as Reason itself is. So  
 that for these Reasons among others, it is  
 highly improper for God to *speak directly*  
 to every *Child* or *Servant* of his, as Fathers  
 or Masters of private Families may and u-  
 sually do in Person. Again. Fathers or  
 Masters, if *absent*, may send their Orders  
 directly under *their* Hand and Seal, to e-  
 very part of their Family concern'd in them.  
 because their Orders are particular to *one* or  
 a *few* Persons, and the Persons to whom  
 they are sent are all actually existing toge-  
 ther at once, and the written Orders may  
 be *soon* convey'd to them very fair and en-  
 tire. But must God therefore act in this  
 man-





manner? Must he write his Orders himself or by special authorised Secretaries, and send them to *all* his Servants and Children under his *Hand* and *Seal* in all *quarters* of the World, and in all succeeding *Ages*? Must he raise up *continually* his Prophets and Messengers for this purpose, with clear incontestible Credentials of their divine Authority? This would require the same profusion of *Miracles* as before; and what is more remarkable, would even disguise and efface that very Evidence to his Orders, which is here desir'd to attest them. The only present *Hand* and *Seal*, which God can set to his *reveal'd* Orders for the use of Persons uninspir'd, is that of a *divine Testimony* to his Ministers in miraculous *Powers* confer'd upon them. Now were these miraculous *Powers* exerted *perpetually* to all succeeding Generations, the very *Use* of those Powers would by their frequency be entirely defeated, and the *End* of them absolutely frustrated. For if *works*, which are now *miraculous*, were once become *usual* and *familiar* by constant production, they would lose the Design and the very Nature of *Miracles*. One essential characteristic of *Miracles*, which distinguishes that sort of *Es-*

CHAP. III. *Effects* from all others, is the *rarity* and *extraordinary* Appearance of them, not any peculiar *Difficulty* in the Thing itself with respect to God, beyond that of the most ordinary Effects in Nature. All things that are *possible*, are alike *easy* to God, and Miracles are as *easy* to his infinite Power, as any thing in the common and stated Course of Nature can be; the only difference is, that *Miracles* are his *extraordinary* or *preternatural* Works, and for that reason *wonderful* to us, and signifying his unusual Interposition and Operation for some particular End. But if such miraculous Effects were daily repeated from Age to Age, they would at length by their Number and Constancy cease to *affect* us as Miracles should do, with *surprize* and *Admiration* (r), and would no longer bear the Name and Character of *Miracles*, but sink into common Occurrences, and form only a *different*

(r) Non moverent, nisi mira essent; at si solita essent, mira non essent. Nam diei & noctis vices, & constantissimum Ordinem rerum cœlestium &c. da qui primum videat atque sentiat, hebescit obruiturque miraculis: Nos vero hæc omnia, non cognoscendi facilitate, quid enim causis horum obscurius, sed certè sentiendi assiduitate contempnimus. *Augustin. Utilit. Credend. cap. 16.*

Eorum consuetudine frigeret genus humanum, quorum novitàate flagravit. *Id. de Ver. Relig. cap. 25.*

Course

*Course* of Nature from that before them. So CHAP. III.  
 that by this means, they would likewise  
 cease to be *Signs* of God's extraordinary Assistance to his Ministers, and clear Attestations to his *Orders* from Heaven *i. e.* in other words, they would cease to carry that impression and significance in them of his *Hand* and *Seal* to his reveal'd Will. From whence you may see, what in Fathers or Masters would be highly expedient and commendable, would in God be quite the reverse, and prove in Event both a Reflection on his Wisdom, and hurtful in its consequences even to his Children and Servants. But what then must we do in this Case? Must we take your *advice*, and resolve to believe and regard no *Orders* and *Revelation* of his, but what we receive immediately from Him by a Voice from Heaven, or at least under his *Hand* and *Seal* of *sensible* Miracles? This methinks would be a strange Resolution, and argue but little Wisdom and Respect in his Servants or Children, if notwithstanding their want of that particular Evidence to his *Orders*, they have still in *another* Way both as much as the Nature of the thing would permit, supposing *a priori* the Truth of a former *Revelation*, and as much as we could



CHAP. could reasonably *expect* at this distance of  
 III time, were it even design'd at first for the  
 ~~~~~ *present Generation*, and as much as will  
 afford satisfactory and rational Grounds of
 Conviction, to inquisitive, serious, and trac-
 table Minds. I put the whole upon *this*
 Issue, and rest the particular Proof of it
 on those accumulated Evidences, often urg'd,
 and at this Day subsisting in their full force
 among us. Now granting, I say, for the
 present only a fair *sufficiency* of Evidence in
 these Circumstances, to insist pertinaciously
 on a *higher* Degree of Evidence, which nei-
 ther the Wisdom of God nor the condition
 of Man will allow, and without this to
 scorn and neglect any *orders* of God propos'd
 to our Belief and Practise as *reveal'd* super-
 naturally by Him, is such Presumption in
 his Creatures and Servants, as is utterly irre-
 concilable with your *Reasons* and *Fitnesses*
 of things.

To shew this in some measure in its pro-
 per Light, do but substitute a Prince and
 his Subjects in the room of your Father and
 his Children, or your Master and his Ser-
 vants, and then observe the Consequence.
 Suppose the King of *England* therefore to
 issue out his Royal Injunctions to his peo-
 ple,

ple, in which *all or most* of his Subjects CHAP. III.
throughout his Dominions are concern'd, 
and in which he has a manifest Right to
their Obedience. I ask now, must every
individual Subject of his wait and *suspend his*
Obedience, till he *speaks* with his Majesty in
Person, or *hears from Him* in the most *di-*
rect and *unexceptionable Way*? Might any
one safely refuse to *comply* with his *Orders*,
tho' otherwise publick and plain enough,
only because *some* wanted his *Hand* and
Seal? I am apt to think, his Majesty
would soon put an End to such trouble-
some Scruples by proper Severities; and
without any just Imputations of Cruelty
or Ill-nature. And even in the Instance,
of which you are so particularly fond,
that of a private Family with a Father or
Master at the head of it, we should find
by a small variation of circumstances, that
such Behaviour would comport no better
with that, than the other. Suppose then,
that you were at the Distance of many
Miles from your Family, and upon hearing
of some great Disorders in it, were to send
a Servant or Relation with a Letter of Re-
primand to your Family, with particular
instructions how you expect and require
them

CHAP. them to behave upon pain of your Displea-
 III. sure. And that he or they to whom you
 direct your Admonitions, should immedi-
 ately upon opening reject them with Scorn,
 and excuse themselves from observing such
Orders, by saying, it was *only probable* and
very uncertain, whether these were really
your Orders or not, since to them they are
 convey'd by a Person, whose Testimony
 and Authority is *fallible*, and who might
possibly deceive them, by counterfeiting your
Hand and Seal for private Ends of his own;
 and therefore as they could not depend on
Orders convey'd to them in that *roundabout*
 manner, they would go on acting as they
 did before, till you came yourself, and
spoke to them in Person, and gave Orders in
 a more *direct* and *unexceptionable Way*.
 Now what would you think of these Offen-
 ders in your Family, and how would you
 treat them? Would you fairly acquit them
 for their *Prudence* and *Caution*, and admit
 their Plea of insufficient Evidence for your
Orders? I believe, we might safely trust
 you for being so easily pacified and impos'd
 upon. Well then, suppose now again, that
 by greatly enlarging your Distance, it was
necessary, that these same Orders of your's
 should

should pass instead of one thro' 40 or 50 or CHAP. even a hundred Hands successively, before III. they came to your Family; would this additional circumstance quite evacuate your Orders, so as wholly to justify an absolute neglect of them? You will agree with me here too, I dare say, that it would not. Neither would the Case be much alter'd, should we add to these a 100 hands more, provided the *Distance* requir'd so many, as we know it may, by our *foreign* Letters. Now if all this be true, in a Case where the Evidence bears *no proportion* in a manner to that in a *Traditional Revelation*, what becomes of your mighty Difficulty with respect to *Divine Orders* or a *Divine Revelation*, convey'd to those of *remoter* Ages upon Human Testimony? For if they are but *written* by Persons most evidently employed as his Agents and *Penmen*, and sign'd or attested by Him as his own *Will* in a way suitable to the Supreme Being, and clearly convey'd to us as faithfully at least, as yours in the Case above would appear to be to your Children or Servants, what would the *Distance* signify between me or you and the first Writers of God's Commands, or the Multitude of *Hands* through which

CHAP. which they are convey'd to us? And why
 III. should we expect or desire, that God would
 speak to us in *Person* or inform us in some
 more *direct way*, when we are *sufficiently*
 inform'd of his Will already? You will say
 perhaps, that Men may live at such a Di-
 stance from the first Preachers and Penmen
 of God's *reveal'd Will*, as not to be fur-
 nish'd with the very *Originals* of their Wri-
 tings, but only with *Copies* or *Transcripts*
 of it, when the other is lost. This I al-
 low to be true, and is actually the Case
 with us of these Times, which makes it
 indeed something different from that of your
 Servants or Children, but not unlike that
 of the Subjects beforemention'd, receiving
 Injunctions from their Prince, of whose o-
 riginal Writing 99 Parts in a Hundred of
 the whole Kingdom can only have Copies,
 and yet may be assur'd beyond all reason-
 able Doubt of the Faithfulness of their Co-
 pies, and will also be oblig'd to follow those
 Copies. And so may we, whatever be our
 Distance in *Place* or *Time*; and we must be
 contented with such Copies, where the
Number and *Distance* of the Persons is so
 great, that *all* in the nature of things can-
 not possibly be furnish'd with *Originals*.

How

However even this I propose not as a parallel Case in *all* respects, but only to shew by one Instance, that Obedience may in us be *due* and *necessary* to Commands, which come not immediately from the Person commanding, or in the most *direct way* of conveying them. In the mean time tho' *we* lie under this Disadvantage, yet others there may be, and those very numerous too, whose Distance from the Fountain Head may be so much *less*, and opportunities *greater* than our's, that they might even see the very *Originals*, tho' convey'd to them thro' many Hands successively; and thus would be plac'd in the circumstances of your Family; and by them we of later times may be assur'd, that *our* Copies agree with *theirs*, and from thence with the *Originals* themselves in every thing material. So that in short, this Parallel of your's will leave us exactly where it found us, without gaining one tittle against *Human Testimony*, or a *divine Revelation* convey'd by it. It is only indeed one remarkable Instance, how strangely a good Understanding may be *clouded*, and the Judgment perverted by too strong an Influence of *Passions* and *Prejudices*.

BUT

CHAP. BUT now we are to combat another sort
 III. of Difficulty. "Tho', say you, we may
 ~~~~~ "be inform'd by *Human Testimony*, and  
 "good *historical Evidence* of very impor-  
 "tant Facts, and Facts which we could  
 "not otherwise have known, yet we are  
 "ask'd, what *certain Mark or Criterion* have  
 "we to distinguish *Human Testimony* from  
 "divine *Authority*, or how we can prove  
 "from *Human Testimony*, that any Doctrine  
 "comes from God, as a Matter of Consci-  
 "ence and eternal Salvation. pag. 345. I an-  
 swer, by the same way that a Civilian could  
 prove what is *Roman Law* from the *Di-*  
*gest* or *Justinian's Institutes*, and our own  
 Lawyers what is *Statute Law* with us by  
*Old Acts of Parliament*, and all with a *Cer-*  
*tainty* sufficient for any serious and reasona-  
 ble Man. Indeed if you mean here by a  
*certain Mark and Criterion*, one that is  
*demonstrative* and absolutely *infallible*, by  
 which we cannot *possibly* be deceiv'd, I must  
 own, there is no such *Mark* to be had from  
*Human Testimony*; no not even from the  
 highest and strongest that can be imagin'd,  
 nor even upon the very *Supposition* of a true  
 antecedent *Revelation* from God. For mere  
*Men* will always be *Men*, and *physically pos-*  
*sible*

fible it will ever be for them both to err and CHAP.  
 deceive; so that we neither do nor can pre- III.  
 tend to any *absolute* certainty from their  
 Testimony. Nor is it necessary at all to  
 our Cause; that we should; because we  
 alledge it not as Grounds of strict philoso-  
 phical Science, but in Evidence only to pass  
*Facts*; as to which, tho' *infallible* Demon-  
 strations can never be given in any Case;  
 yet all Mankind allow an *indubitable* Cer-  
 tainty, such as may produce a firm Assent  
 and Persuasion in the Mind, free from all  
 Suspicion and Diffidence. Thus in the pre-  
 sent Case, stated before at large, Human  
 Testimony informs us, that such and such  
 Men did once live upon Earth, as it does  
 in *Civil History* as to *Cicero, Cæsar, Plato,*  
*Aristotle, &c*; and that such and such Books  
 were written and publish'd by those Men,  
 and that such is the genuine Text of those  
 Authors, and that such were their Works;  
 Behaviour, and End in the World, with  
 many other curious particulars; all which  
 may be as *certain* to us, as any *Facts* of the  
 same *kind* and at the same *Distance* either  
 are or can be; and so far *certain*, as to  
 leave no room in any reasonable Minds for  
 Doubt and Disbelief. This in short is the

CHAP. Sum of all that we attribute to *Human Testimony*; and when we are thus inform'd of these particular *Facts*, our *Reason* collects from the whole, in what Degree and Extent a *Divine Authority* must be justly ascrib'd to such Men and their Writings, and shews us as clearly from the same *Facts* and Writings, how we may distinguish *Divine* from *Human Doctrines*, as it does to our Lawyers, what is *Statute-Law* and what is not in the *old Acts* of Parliament. Both we and they must be guided in the Knowledge and Resolution of these Points by *Human Testimony*, and I hope, with *Certainty* enough for *Civil Life* and *Human Concerns*, tho' not a *Certainty* mathematical and *infallible*. And tho' we take *Human Testimony* for our *Guide* so far as 'tis *necessary* and proper, yet we do not put out our own Eyes; we still make use of our *Reason*, and no farther do we claim or depend upon the former, than is *consistent* with the clear and genuine Dictates of the latter, and with the soundest Principles of *Human Prudence*. By which means we are secur'd effectually, if we are not wanting to ourselves, both from *Superstition* and *Credulity* on one side, and irreverent *Prophaneness*

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phaneness or extravagant Scepticism on the CHAP.  
other. And as we do not implicitly ad- III.  
mit any Doctrine for *Divine Truth*, which  
is plainly *erroneous*, nor any other, which  
may be *true* consider'd in itself, as coming  
from God, without the greatest Care and  
Circumspection, and the strongest Evidence,  
we are, I think, in no considerable Dan-  
ger of *erring* extremely in the *Authority* of  
Doctrines thus receiv'd upon *Human Testi-*  
*mony*; and what is much to our comfort,  
and should always be remembred, we are  
sure, tho' by Accident we might perhaps  
err in some Article, we are sure I say, of  
erring on the *right Side*, and that innocent-  
ly and blamelessly in the Sight of God; who  
will never be offended with our following  
the *best Light* he has afforded us, and pay-  
ing so scrupulous a Veneration to that which  
*appears to us his reveal'd Will*. And if so,  
I leave any Man to judge, which Side of  
the Question, Humility, Prudence, and  
our Duty to God recommends to our  
Choice.

NEITHER is there any more weight in  
a subsequent Observation of yours upon the  
same Head. "That supposing it ever *so*  
"true and clearly prov'd in *Fact* (viz. That

CHAP. " Miracles had been wrought for the Proof

III. " of any *particular Doctrine* in former A-

ges) *no Consequence* can be drawn from  
 " any such thing *i. e.* *no Consequence* as to  
 the *Truth* or *Divine Authority* of any such  
*Doctrine. ibid.* What *Consequence* may just-  
 ly be drawn in favour of *Doctrines* from  
 Miracles wrought in Attestation to them,  
 has been consider'd before at large. The  
 Question now is, what Evidence *Tradition-  
 al* Miracles will give to particular Do-  
 ctrines, when *both* are convey'd and notified  
 to us by *good Historical Relations* or Hu-  
 man Testimony. As to which, to affirm  
 that *no Consequence* can be drawn from the  
 Miracles in proof of the *Doctrines*, tho' ever,  
*so true* and ever *so clearly* prov'd in Fact,  
 is strange indeed and unaccountable. For  
 one would think, that Miracles so very  
*clearly* prov'd to us in *Fact*, should like-  
 wise *clearly* prove *as much* with regard to  
 the *Doctrines* confirm'd by them, as they  
 did with regard to the *same*, when they *first*  
 appear'd in the World. And nothing more,  
*Philaletes*, do I or any Man of us desire.  
 But a strong Reason, it seems, forbids their  
*proving* any thing at all; for "'tis certain  
 " that the Being and Moral Perfections of

" God

“ God, and the natural Relations of Man CHAP.  
 “ to Him, as his reasonable Creatures, and III.  
 “ the Subject of his Moral Government,   
 “ cannot *depend* upon the Truth or Falshood  
 “ of any *Historical Facts*, or upon our form-  
 “ ing a *right* or *wrong* Judgment concern-  
 “ ing them. *ibid.* Most notable Argument tru-  
 ly, *Philaethes!* By which you would *oppose*  
 what no body maintains, and by which in  
 effect you prove *too much* against even your  
 own most darling Principles, and at the  
 same time not one tittle against the Point  
 in dispute. For in the first place, who ever  
 asserted, that the *Being* and *Moral Perfec-*  
*tions* of God *depend* on the Truth or Fals-  
 hood of *Historical Facts*? Especially on that  
 particular Fact of *Revelation*? It is in truth  
 a plain downright Contradiction in Terms,  
 since every *Revelation* from God must *pre-*  
*suppose* and *depend* itself on his *Being* and  
*Attributes*. And to say likewise, that the  
*natural Relations* of Man to God as his rea-  
 sonable Creature *depend* on *such* Historical  
 Facts, is no less absurd than the other; since  
 these must be necessarily *previous* to all oc-  
 casional *Revelation*, as arising from our very  
*Creation* and *Existence*, and being the ulti-  
 mate Ground of the Truth, Obligation, and



CHAP. Efficacy of the other. For which reason

III. all are agreed as to this Point likewise, without one Negative, that I know of, to the contrary. To what purpose therefore is it to insist on these things, in which you have no Opponent, when that, which is the Point of Disagreement, and deserved your greatest Attention, namely the *Conclusion* or *Inference* from all these *Premises*, seems to have been out of your thoughts, or very little consider'd? For here 2d. you urge an Argument against *Human Testimony* and *Historical Facts*, which equally holds against *Human Reason*, and all Theological Deductions from it. The *Being* and *Moral Perfections* of God, and the *natural Relations* of Man to Him depend not at all in *themselves*, that I know of, upon *our Reason* or *Judgment* concerning them; they would still continue what they *are*, whether we perceived them or not, and whether our Judgments concerning them were *right* or *wrong*: are we therefore at once to renounce all the Authority of *Reason*, and deny the force of any *Consequences* drawn from it in religious Matters? I suppose you admit this Conclusion no more than myself; and yet your *premises* lead us

as

as regularly to it, as they do to your own. From whence you may see, they prove *too much*, and ought to be discarded accordingly in the present dispute. But I guess at your *Thought* in general, tho' you tripp'd unluckily in the *Expression* of it. You might mean, that our *Ideas* or *Notions* of the Being and Perfections of God, &c. cannot depend on the *truth* or *falsehood* of any *historical Facts*. And had you inserted these words in your Argument, I should not then have retorted it on *Human Reason*. But still it is faulty and inconclusive against the Position I defend; and the great fault of it lies in mistating and misrepresenting the Case. You consider *Human Testimony* and *Tradition* as wholly *exclusive* and *independent* of Human Reason, and we espouse the same in *conjunction* with it, and perfect agreement to it. We do not assert, that all our *Notions* of Religion and Morality depend in such a Sense on *Facts* either of *original* or *Traditional* Revelation, that *Reason* must not be consulted about it, nor any regard be preserv'd for the *clear* fundamental Principles of it; and that all *Doctrines* propos'd to us, as *coming from God* in this supernatural way, must presently be

CHAP. admitted as such, whether *right* or *wrong*  
 III. in the Judgment of Reason, whether agree-  
 able with, or contradictory to it. That is  
 not the Point we maintain, and is really as far  
 from our Thoughts, as from any *Philoso-*  
*pher's* in the Kingdom. But what we assert  
 in short is this, that as, *supposing* no such  
 internal Objection from *Reason*, we may  
 have incontestible Proof of a divine *Revela-*  
*tion* by *Miracles* wrought before our Eyes,  
 so may we have *unquestionable* Proof of the  
 same, with regard to a certain System of  
 Doctrines, by *Miracles* related to us in a  
*faithful* History, tho' not the Objects of our  
*Senses*. Now what are we the wiser, or  
 how are we hurt in the least, by being told,  
 that the *Moral Perfections of God*, and the  
*natural Relations of Man to him* (or our *Ideas*  
*of all these things*) cannot depend upon *histo-*  
*rical Facts*? Depend upon *these* they may  
 not, either the one for *existence*, or the other  
 for *Truth*; but still there is something of sig-  
 nal Use to our *Wills* and *Understandings*, for  
 which we *may* and *must* solely depend on  
 such *Historical Facts*; and that is, the Know-  
 ledge of God's own express *Instructions*  
 concerning these and other religious Matters;  
 Which may serve to improve, enlarge, and  
 confirm



confirm our *natural* Notions to the highest Degree, and administer *extraordinary* Succours and Encouragements to our Piety and Virtue. For which excellent Advantages it is both inestimable in itself, and renders the *means* of attaining it worth our serious Care and most diligent inquiry. Now the *Means* of attaining it with us are *Human Testimony* or *Historical Evidence*. And if the *Facts* abovemention'd are *clearly* prov'd to us by *History* beyond all reasonable doubt, what plea can we have for disbelieving their *Reality*? And if *we* of this time cannot reasonably avoid believing their *Reality*, how can *we* avoid the *Evidence* to Doctrines arising from them, any more than the first *Spectators* of them? For my part, I see no other way of evading their force, supposing as you do here, *clear* Evidence of their *Truth*, but either by shewing, what is *false* to Demonstration, that such Facts tho' *seen* with our Eyes can never prove any thing as to Doctrines; or, what is equally incredible, that God does not expect Men to believe his *reveal'd* Will from any other Miracles, than those, of which they are themselves *Eyewitnesses*: Contrary to that express Declaration of *Jesus Christ*, *Blessed are they*

CHAP.  
III.



CHAP. *they who have not seen, and yet have believed*

III. (s). Which words of our great and common Master imply most certainly, both that *divine Faith* might justly be founded on *Human Testimony*, and that *Duty* and *Interest* both might oblige Men to it.

BUT all of a sudden you change the Scene from a *clear* and *serene Light*, to *Clouds* and *Darkness*, and take your leave of us with great *Precipitation* in the midst of it. "This, say you, would depend upon so many *uncertain* circumstances and *possibilities* of Error, and God in this Case must be suppos'd to have plac'd the Salvation of Mankind upon a very *precarious* and *sandy* Foundation. p. 346. Where are we now, *Philaetbes*? I thought, just before we had good *historical Evidence* and very *clear* Proofs of the *Facts* under Consideration. What have we to do then with these many *uncertain* circumstances, *precarious* and *sandy* Foundations? You may fancy yourself, if you please, encompass'd with thick *Egyptian Darkness* in broad Day-Light, or lost in a Wood or Wilderness while sitting at home in your own Chair. And so as to *Historical Facts* of all kinds, especially those

(s) *John. XX. 29.*

of

of antient Date, you may raise up in a warm CHAP.  
Imagination abundance of visionary phan- III.  
toms, by which they may all be involv'd  
in endless perplexities and uncertainties, and  
fill a romantick Head with Blindness and  
Mazes inextricable. And as to *Reason* itself  
and the Evidences of *Sense*, how many  
Doubts and Difficulties have been started,  
and plausibly dress'd up in *Theory* by *Pyrrhonists*  
Antient and Modern? What innumerable  
*possibilities* of *Error* have they plac'd  
round about us on all sides (t)? And yet,  
God be thanked, when we come from abstract  
*Speculation* to particular *Fact*, our Frights  
and Doubts are at an End, and we see good  
Authority for trusting our *Reason*, and *Senses*,  
and *History* as before, and find no alteration  
for the worse in our *real* Circumstances.  
So also, in *Traditional Revelation*, a teeming  
Brain may conceive such Plots Intrigues  
and Reveries of *Knaves* and *Enthusiasts*,  
such Fictions of Facts and Forgeries of Books,  
such tricks of Librarians and negligence of  
Scribes, as at last may turn

(t) See *Cicero*. *Academic. Quest. L. 4.*

*Sextus Empyric. Pyrrhon. Hypotypof.*

*Cronkax. Exam. du Pyrrhonism. 1733.*

*Huet. Weakness of Hum. Understanding.*



CHAP. the Man's head with the dismal assemblage  
 III. of Ideas, and make him a mere *Felo de se* in  
 ~~~~~ Scepticism. But who can help that, if the  
 Man will needs be distracted with pure *Ideal possibilities*, without descending to plain *Fact*, and weighing the *real Evidence* of things? The regular way is surely to consider not *abstractedly* what is *possible* to happen, but what has *actually happen'd* in the Case before us. Here we should *begin* our Enquiry, and if we find upon the strictest search thro' Antiquity backwards, that our present Accounts and Records of a former Revelation are *not* so *uncertain* and *precarious*, as a plodding gloomy *Theorist* may imagine, but faithful, strong, and convincing, without any tolerable Colour and Grounds for Suspicion, why should we be troubled or stagger'd with intimations of *many uncertain circumstances, and possibilities of Error*, which we see and know have *not* enter'd in *Fact* to any *considerable* Degree into the present Case? Suppose only the *real* State of things to be such, as I have mention'd, and your whole Objection founded on mere *surmises* immediately vanishes; for then, notwithstanding *Human Testimony*, we may build our Faith on rational substantial Evidence; and

and God will place the *Salvation* of Men, CHAP. where he always will do it, not on *sandy* III. but *solid* and durable foundations. And what is farther observable, we may even presume *a priori*, as I have hinted before, that if any *Revelation* from God is *design'd* for succeeding Ages, a peculiar Providence will continually attend it, and guard both the *Substance* and *Evidences* of it in such a manner, as to yield *sufficient* means of Conviction to future Ages. So that you have no pretence for *supposing* such great and numerous *Defects* in the Case, as certain *concomitants* of it, when 'tis equally *possible* and much more *probable*, that all may be pure Invention, and not affect *our* System in the least. And on the other side, to cut off all murmurs and complaints at once; were things in *Fact*, as you insinuate, so *uncertain* and *precarious*, as *not* to give us *rational* Grounds of Faith, or Evidence *sufficient* for our Conviction, I should then not scruple to allow, that a gracious God *will not place our Salvation* upon them, in such Circumstances. What remains therefore now, but to leave all *imaginary* Difficulties, and to come directly to the *merits* of the Cause? Upon a careful examination of which we may

CHAP. may see what are the *true and real* Grounds
IV. of our *Christian Faith*.

CHAP. IV.

*Shewing, the Evidence of Divine Authority
in Jesus Christ and his Apostles, both to
the first and succeeding Ages, with An-
swers to Objections.*

HAVING examin'd in the Chapters
preceding, your *general Principles*
concerning the *Evidence of Divine Truth*
or of *Doctrines coming from God*, the *Nature*
and *Use of Miracles, Divine Faith,*
Human Testimony &c. I now proceed, *Pbi-*
lalthes, to consider, how far they agree
with the *genuine Religion and true Autho-*
rity of that great Prophet, you so much
admire, *Jesus Christ*; and to shew what
Aspect and Influence they have upon it.
You frankly "profess yourself a *Christian*
"upon the foot of the *New Testament*. p.
"359. You acknowledge the *immortal and*
"unrival'd *Glory of our Christian Prophet,*
"and that he has given us the best Account
"of the *Nature, Attributes and Will of God,*
"of any other *Prophet or Lawgiver in the*
"World;

“*World; and stated more clearly the several* CHAP.
 “*Duties and Obligations of Moral Truth* IV.
 “*and Righteousness, and enforc’d them with*
 “*stranger Motives, and encourag’d them*
 “*with the Promises of more effectual Aids*
 “*and Assistances, than had ever been done*
 “*by any other Prophet, Moralist, or Law-*
 “*giver in Religion.* p. 167, 392, 411. You
 allow also his illustrious *Miracles*, and the
 great *supernatural Gifts and Powers* con-
 fer’d upon his *Apostles* and other *Disciples*;
 and you likewise represent the strange and
 good *Effects*, which those *Miracles* had
 upon the *People*. p. 80, 81, 167. All which
 are, no doubt, very handsome and laudable
 Concessions, and such as we ought to ac-
 cept with suitable Regards at your Hands.
 And now upon the Strength of these chief-
 ly, you let us know at last in pretty smart
 Terms, how much you disrelish and un-
 deserve the Titles of *Sceptic* and *Infidel*,
 when they mean *Immorality* and *Irreligion*
 of any sort. p. 355, 356. And for my part,
 I would not rob you of one grain of *Reli-*
 gion, that properly belongs to you, and
 should heartily rejoyce to find you with-
 out the least Tincture of *Infidelity*. But
 that is a pleasure, I can only wish for at
 present;

CHAP. present; since your Title itself of a *Christian Deist*, borrow'd from *Christianity as old &c.* (u) gives room for Suspensions; and some other Principles you advance are too glaring Proofs to me of your great Deficiency in true *Christian Faith*.

To begin with the *Authority* of Jesus Christ. We consider and adore him as a *Teacher evidently sent from God*, speaking to Mankind in *his Name*, and acting from beginning to end by a Power and Authority *Divine*. And accordingly we receive all his *Doctrines* and *Precepts*, not only as *true* or *good*, but as the *Oracles* and *Laws* of *God*; and as such we profess ourselves bound indispensably to *believe* and *obey* them. And the plain *decisive* Evidence of his *Divine Mission*, we place in those astonishing Miracles (including his *Prophecies*) which he display'd in his Life-time upon Earth, and in his glorious *Resurrection* after Death, with the marvellous *Consequents* upon it. By all which Actions and Events, we are fully convinc'd, that the *Almighty was with him* throughout, and that in Him dwelt all the *Fulness of the Godhead*. Now what say you, *Philaethes*, to this Point? Why you

(u) Christianity as old &c. p. 333, 336. 8vo.

call *Jesus Christ*, a *Prophet*, a *Lawgiver* (w), CHAP. IV.
a *glorious Martyr* and *Confessor* for the Truth; but you effectually strip Him and his Doctrine of all *Divine Authority* to us, because you must maintain by your Principles laid down before, that no *Evidence* of this kind either *was* or *could* be given to his very first Disciples, and much less any *Proof* to us in After-Times of any *Divine*

(w) Many even of the *Pagans* heretofore entertain'd and express'd as high Thoughts as these of *Jesus Christ*. So did the Emperor *Alexander Severus*, who receiv'd him into the Number of his *Deities*, and would have built a Temple to his Honour, had not the Pagans about him most vigorously remonstrated against it. This *Spartianus* (vulg. *Lampridius*) a Heathen Historian relates of him expressly in his Life. Cap. 29. 43. Hist. August. Tom. I. Ed. Var.

And thus did *Porphyry* honour him as a most pious, and wise Man, translated into the Heavens, and approv'd by his own Gods. See his words in *Euseb. Demonstr. Evangel.* L. 3. p. 134.

Thus also does *Augustine* speak of the Pagans in his own Time. *Dominum ipsum Jesum Christum culpam aut Blasphemare non audent, eique attribuunt excellentissimam sapientiam; sed tamen tanquam Homini. Honorandum tanquam sapientissimum Virum putant, colendum autem tanquam Deum negant.* Augustin. de Consens. Evangelist. L. I. c. VII.

Nay *Mohammed* himself speaks of him frequently in his *Coran* with the greatest Reverence, he even acknowledges his *Miracles*, and denounces a Curse against those who believe not on him. See the *Coran*. Ch. III, IV, V, XLIII. So that for a *Christian* to stile him "only a *Prophet*" or a *Lawgiver* is no very extraordinary Compliment.

Q

Mission

CHAP. *Mission or Inspiration from God belonging*
 IV. to Him. For you tell us very plainly,

~ "That whatever *Certainty* God may convey to a Man's Mind by *Inspiration* or "*immediate Revelation*, the Knowledge of "*any such Truths* can go no further upon "*Divine Authority* or as a matter of *Divine Faith*, than to the Person or Persons thus inspir'd; and whoever afterwards receives any Truth from them, must take it upon their sole Credit and Authority, and not at all upon a *Divine Testimony*, or upon the *Authority of God*. p. 82. Now if so, then it follows directly, that the Knowledge of any Truths communicated immediately by God to Jesus Christ, could go no further upon *Divine Authority*, than only to *Jesus Christ*; and whoever afterwards receiv'd it from him, must take it not upon any *Divine Testimony* at all, but his sole Credit and Authority, which according to you could appear to be nothing more than *Human*. Neither is this to be wondred at in the least, since with you the supernatural Power of working *Miracles* has no manner of Connection with *Truth* or *Righteousness*, nor can ever be taken for proper Evidence or Proof of *Doctrines*



crimes, being only of use to awaken and alarm Men, remove Prejudices, and procure Attention to what is deliver'd; and no farther ought they to have any Weight or Influence with any Body. Behold now, Philaetes, how finely the Gospel and true Christianity begins to thrive in your Hands! The great Author and Founder of it Jesus Christ, notwithstanding his extraordinary Wisdom from above, and all the Lustre of his Power in such amazing Signs and Wonders, is brought at last into the World, by your Philosophic Scheme, without any Proof of Authority belonging to Him, more than Human, and is dwindled into a common Preacher of true Piety and Virtue; whose Excellence and Superiority above all others consists only in the Justness of his Moral Sentiments, the Integrity of his Heart, his Patience under Sufferings, and Promises of high Rewards to his Followers, with some other Accomplishments, which however great and shining in themselves, may, as you have represented them, be found not without Example in other Men. And tho' by his new and admirable System of Truth and Righteousness, his Business was to convert an ignorant, superstitious, and wicked

CHAP. World from the Error of their Ways, to
 IV, root up *inveterate* Prejudices, *establish'd* Polytheism, and *predominant* Corruptions, yet his *Lessons* were to make their way into the Hearts and Lives of Men, and bring about this amazing Revolution, by no other *Evidence* attending them, but that of their *Moral Reason* and *Fitness*; and where this *Moral Reason* and *Fitness* could not be discern'd by a blind and perverse Generation, overwhelm'd with Depravities and Vices, his Audience, tho' *awaken'd* and *alarum'd* by his Miracles, had no other Grounds of *Conviction*, no other Assurances of his Mission from God; and their only *Mark* and *Criterion* of *Divine Truth*, by which they were ever and *solely* to be guided, was the Light of their own thus accomplish'd Understandings! And even the *little*, which perhaps some Men more tractable than the rest might believe, would be receiv'd upon no more *divine Faith*, by your Hypothesis, than a good *Moral Lecture* from you or me; having nothing to support it, but either the *reasonableness* of the thing, or the sole *Credit* and *Testimony* of *Jesus* himself, a *mere Man* to all Appearance like themselves. What an excellent Scheme had this of

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of yours been for advancing the Honour and Success of our great Prophet, and reforming the *Pagan* World from Idolatry and Impurity! Had you been rais'd up in the Days of *Augustus*, and infused these noble Principles into the *Jews*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, and inspir'd them with a proper Contempt of Miracles, how easily would the *Jewish* Nation, and the *Heathen* World have triumph'd over Christ and his Apostles! The *Jews* would have known, that if *Jesus* could not prove a *Divine* Mission, they could not be oblig'd in *Duty* to relinquish their old venerable Lawgiver *Moses*; nor could they incur any *Guilt* in refusing to embrace a new System of Religion, of which a *fallible* Man was the Projector. Nor would they have been perswaded of any more *Reason* and *Fitness* in Christ's Doctrines, than was visible in their own sacred Books; and so, no doubt, would have adher'd immoveably, as there appear'd no tempting Encouragements on the other side, to their old Constitution and Form of Worship. On the other hand, the *Pagan Philosophers* had too much Pride and Attachment to their several Sects to become Disciples of rude unletter'd *Barbarians*, who

CHAP. had nothing of *Logical Subtlety* or *Rhetorical*
 IV. *Embellishments* in their Speech, nor
 ~ any *Credentials* to shew or Arguments to
 produce for their Doctrines, but what every
 Sect might pretend and ascribe to their
 own System, viz. a mere *Moral Reason* and
Fitness in their *Doctrine*. And as to a
crucified Saviour, a Resurrection of the Bo-
 dy, and the like, these Topicks to the last
 would all have been *foolishness* to the grand
Disputers of this World, and pass'd only as
 the Dreams and Chimæras of whimsical En-
 thusiasts. In the mean time the *Populace*
 to a Man would have shun'd and abhorr'd
 the Apostles as *Atheists*, for endeavouring
 to pull down their Shrines and Images,
 destroy their Sacred *Rites*, and banish their
Tutelar Deities; and would have steadily
 persever'd unanimously in the reigning Ido-
 latri and Superstition, approv'd and requir'd,
 as they thought, by real *Divinities*; with-
 out hearkening to the Novel Theology of
 Men, who had nothing of *Divine* Autho-
 rity to urge for it. And thus had your
Doctrine of Miracles prevail'd in those
 Times, your *Moral Reason* and *Fitness*
 would have signified but little, while the
Reason and Notions of Mankind, by which
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 32. 33.

the other would be framed, continued thus CHAP.
dark and erroneous; and in all probability, IV.
this very Island of ours might as this Day 
have practised all those Abominations, which
now 'tis our Happiness only to read in *Elias*
Schedius (*) and other Histories. At least
I will venture to pronounce, that 17 Cen-
turies would not have produc'd that num-
ber of Converts to the Gospel upon *your*
Principles, which *two* did in fact upon
better.

BUT 'tis time now, after shewing the
tendency of your positions, and how inju-
rious and even destructive they must be to
the *whole* Religion of Jesus Christ in point
of *Authority*, to attack directly the Positions
themselves, and prove them to be no less
false and *groundless*, than they appear to be
mischievous. And here I will shew, First.
That Miracles of that *Kind, Number, Con-*
tinuance, and so circumstantiated, as those
of our Lord and his Apostles are *suppos'd* to
be, would *alone* to Eyewitneses evince both
his and *their* Divine Mission; and these con-
sider'd again in Conjunction with their *Doc-*
trine would amount to a full Demonstra-

(*) *Elias Sched. de D's Germanis. Syntagm. II. cap. 31,*
32, 33.

CHAP. tion of it. 2d. That such Miracles of our
 IV. Lord *faithfully recorded* by his own Apostles
 and Eyewitnesses of them, and such of the
 latter by their Disciples and Attendants, to-
 gether with particular Accounts of our Lord's
 Doctrine by the same Apostles, and that of
 his Ministers by *themselves* in writing, would
 prove no less to all in *succeeding* times,
 who have these writings transmitted down
 to their hands, with clear and unquestiona-
 ble Evidence, of their being *genuine*, entire,
 and uncorrupted in any thing material. 3d.
 That we of *this Age* are exactly in the Case
 abovemention'd.

FIRST then, I say, that the Miracles of
 our Lord and his Apostles, if *true* as you
suppose them to be, would *alone* to Eyewit-
 nesses evince both *His* and *their* divine Mis-
 sion. For how in reason should it be other-
 wise? It would be as plain as the Sun at
 Noon-Day, that such astonishing works
 could not be effected by any *natural materi-
 al* Causes, nor by any inherent *Power* or ac-
 quir'd *Art* of *Man*. All Men know suf-
 ficiently, that in a bare *Word* or a *Touch*,
 there can be no *natural* Efficacy to give
Sight to the *Blind*, or *Speech* to the *Dumb*,
 or *Feet* to the *Lame*, or *Health* to a *distem-*
per'd

per'd Body, or Life to the Dead. The low-
est Peasant as well as the deepest Philoso-
pher might see, that all these Effects were
produc'd without *natural* Causes, and ex-
ceeded the utmost Limits of all Human Ca-
pacities. They must therefore be necessa-
rily attributed to some intelligent Being *su-*
perior to Man, either God himself, or some
inferior *Good* or *Evil* Spirits above us. But
now to *Evil* Spirits they could not be *rea-*
sonably ascrib'd, both because 'tis utterly *im-*
probable in the Nature of things, as I have
endeavour'd to prove in a former Chapter,
that *Evil* Spirits should even be endued
with a *physical* Power of such Extent, and
because, were they really endued with such
Powers, it would be absolutely irreconcila-
ble with our Ideas of God's *Wisdom*, *Good-*
ness, and *Providence*, to permit their exert-
ing those powers for the *Ends*, and in the
manner and *Circumstances* of the present
Case. It was a Time, when, if ever, a
Divine Revelation would be necessary and
usefull in the highest Degree, when a Sense
of the gross Errors and Corruptions then
prevailing in the World might raise in all
wise and *good* Men the most passionate
Wishes, and most earnest *Expectations* of it.

The

CHAP. The Works perform'd were in their *Nature*

IV. such, as would appear to be the only *present* and *proper Evidence* to persons uninspir'd even of a *true divine Revelation*; and such at the same time in *Magnitude*, as that none *superior* to them could ever be *expected* or even *wrought*, so far as Men are capable of judging, upon the special Interposition of God himself, and for the purpose of *attesting* his own *reveal'd Instructions*. Now let any Man consider attentively this whole Transaction in all its Circumstances, and then he will see most evidently, that either the *Providence* of God, and his Attributes of *Wisdom* and *Goodness* must be wholly set aside as groundless Notions of our's, or that God himself must be the great and glorious Author of all. We are here to suppose, as an excellent Writer (y) observes, that a Person calling himself the *Son of God*, and professing to be sent from Heaven to be the Saviour and Instructor of Mankind, did in Confirmation of his divine Mission and Authority perform the most astonishing Acts of *Power* and *Goodness*; that he at once by a word and mere Will heal'd all sorts of Dis-

(y) Mr. Leland, Answer to Christianity as Old &c. Vol. II. p. 81.

cases, the most inveterate and incurable; CHAP. that he cleansed the Lepers, caus'd the Lame IV. to walk, the Dumb to speak, the Blind to see instantaneously, and rais'd even the Dead in many Instances to a second Life; that he did all this with an Air of Grandeur and Sovereignty, as if He had been Lord of Nature; he only spake, and it was done: that he fed five Thousand at once with five Loaves and two Fishes; that he command- ed the Winds and the Seas, discern'd the very Spirits and most secret Thoughts of Men; that he was twice proclaim'd by a loud Voice from Heaven the *well-pleasing* and *Beloved* Son of God; that he foretold the particular manner of his own Sufferings, the future Treatment of his Disciples, the Judgments that should befall the *Jews* his Murderers, and the mighty Success of his Gospel in the World, against all Oppositi- on, and under the most unpromising and discouraging circumstances; all which sur- prising predictions were punctually verified by the Event. That he likewise appeal'd, which was the strangest and most wonder- ful Thing of all, to his future *Resurrection* after Death, as the most illustrious Proof of his divine Mission, and accordingly did
rise

CHAP. rise again from the Dead the third Day; and

IV. after shewing himself alive for near six Weeks together upon Earth, ascended at last visibly into Heaven; and within ten Days after, as he promis'd and foretold expressly to his Disciples, he pour'd forth upon them the *Holy Spirit* from on High, by which they were enlighten'd in a prodigious Degree, and enabled to speak at once a great Variety of *Languages* never learnt or thought of before, and to perform in his Name many *Signs and Wonders*, such as He himself had wrought while present upon Earth. That farther by a bare Imposition of Hands, these Disciples communicated the same amazing Gifts and Powers to *their* immediate followers, and these again to others. And that all these things were not done in *a corner*, or a *few* Instances, that might admit of some suspicions of Imposture, but *openly* and *publickly*, in the View of great *Multitudes*, and even before their bitterest *Enemies*, and in numberless Instances, and for a long Succession of *Years* together. The visible Effect of all which was, that the Religion which they and their Master preach'd to the World, tho' contrary to the most rooted Prejudices both of

Jews

Jews and Gentiles, and oppos'd with the greatest violence and cruelty by all the powers of the World, yet made its way in the swiftest Progress thro' all these Terrours and Difficulties, and by the glorious Proofs of a divine Interposition in its favour gain'd Thousands every where to its Belief, who embrac'd and persever'd immoveably in it, with the plain and experienc'd Hazard of their Lives, and of all their dearest secular Interests. So that were a Law really given from Heaven with *divine* Authority, for the general Use of Mankind, it could not to our Conceptions come recommended and confirm'd by more illustrious Attestations, than are here exhibited. And if Doubts and Difficulties can possibly arise in *this Case* against a *Divine* Revelation, they might in any *other Case*, as far as we can perceive, be pleaded with the same reason and Credibility. And if this *Doctrine* and these *Miracles* did not come from God, we are left incapable of ever knowing what *do* come from Him, since that *one* Power of raising the Dead to Life is to *Human Reason* as convincing an Argument of the *Finger of God*, as any that can be imagin'd. Now who upon a careful deliberate View of these Wonders

Wonders, could possibly believe, that God had no share in the production of them (2)?

(*) Excellent and memorable are the many Observations of *Arnobius* upon this Head, who was once a *Heathen* himself for many Years, and at last was converted by the Consideration of these stupendous *Miracles*.

Ergo ille mortalis, aut unus fuit & nobis, cujus Imperium, cujus vocem popularibus & quotidianis verbis missam, valedudines, morbi, febrae, atque alia corporum cruciamenta fugiebant? Unus fuit & nobis, cujus praesentiam, cujus visum gens illa nequibat ferre inersorum in visceribus daemonum, contritaeque vi novae, membrorum possessione cedebat? Unus fuit & nobis, cujus fadae vitilignes iussioni obtemperabant pulsi statim, & concordiam colorum commaculatis visceribus relinquebant? Unus fuit & nobis, cujus ex levi tactu stabant profluvia sanguinis, & immoderatos cohibebant fluores? Unus fuit & nobis, cujus manus intercentes & veteranos fugiebant undae, penetrabilis ille vitabat liquor, & turgentia viscera salutaris ariditate desiccabant? Unus fuit & nobis, qui claudos currere praecipiebat? Etiam operis res erat (l. praecipiebat; & jam operis res erat); porrigere mancos manus; & articuli immobilitates jam ingenitas explicabant: captos membris assurgere; etiam (l. & jam) suos referebant lectos alienis paulo ante cervicibus lati: viduatos videre luminibus; etiam (l. & jam) coelum diemque cernebant nullis cum oculis procreati? Unus, inquam, fuit & nobis, qui debilitatibus variis, morbisque vexatos centum, aut hoc amplius, semel una intercessione sanabat? cujus vocem ad simplicem faribunda & insana explicabant se maria? procellarum turbine tempestatesque fidebant? qui per altissimos gurgites pedem ferebat iulutum? calcabat ponti terga undis ipsis stupentibus, in famulatum subeunte natara? qui sequentium se millia quinque, quinque saturavit & panibus, ac, ne esse praestigiae incredulis illis viderentur & duris, bis senarum sportarum sinus reliquiarum fragminibus aggerebat? Unus fuit

Is it credible, that a Being of infinite Wis- CHAP.
dom and Goodness should suffer his own IV!

sacred



fuit è nobis, qui redire in corpora jamdudum animas præ-
cipiebat efflatas, prodire ab aggeribus conditos? & post diem
funeris tertium pollinctorum voluminibus expediri? Unus fuit
è nobis, qui, quid singuli voverent, quid sub obscuris cog-
itationibus continerent, tacitorum in cordibus pervidebat?
Unus fuit è nobis, qui cum officia religionis certæ suis sec-
tatoribus traderet, mundum totum repente complebat, quan-
tusque, & qui esset, revelatâ nominis immensitate monstra-
bat? Unus fuit è nobis, qui deposito corpore innumeris se
hominum promptâ in luce detexit? qui sermonem dedit,
atque accepit, docuit, castigavit, admonuit? Qui ne illi se
falsos vanis imaginationibus existimarent, semel, iterum,
sepius familiari colloquutione monstravit? qui iustissimis viris
etiam impollatis, ac diligentibus sese, non per vana in-
somnia, sed per puræ speciem simplicitatis apparet? cujus
nomen auditum fugat noxios spiritus? imponit silentium va-
tibus? haruspices inconsultos reddit? arrogantium mago-
rum frustrari efficit actiones, non horrore, ut dicitis, nomi-
nis, sed majoris licentiâ potestatis: Et hæc quidem summa-
tim exposita, non ea ratione protulimus, tanquam magnitudo
facientis solis in his esset perspicienda virtutibus. Quanta
sint enim hæc, vel exilitatis ejus reperientur & ludi, si tra-
ditum fuerit nosci, ex quibus ad nos regna, cujus numinis
ministrator advenerit? Quæ quidem ab eo gesta sunt, & facti-
tata, non ut se vanâ ostentatione jactaret, sed ut homines du-
ri, atque increduli scirent non esse, quod spondebatur, falsum:
& ex operum benignitate, quid esset Deus verus, jam addif-
cerent suspicari. ———— Quid? quod istas virtutes, quæ
sunt a nobis summatim, non ut rei poscebat magnitudo, de-
promptæ, non tantum ipse perferit vi sua, verum quod erat
sublimius, multos alias experiri, & facere sui nominis cum
affectione permittit. Nam cum videret futuras vos assigera-

rum

CHAP. sacred Name to be thus usurp'd by Deceivers, and an Imposture to be thus carried on and confirm'd by such a Series of Miracles, and by Miracles which Men could not avoid esteeming as Effects; if any at all, of his extraordinary Interposition; and these

rum ab se rerum, diviniq[ue] operis abrogatores, ne qua sub-
esset suspicio, magicis se artibus munera illa beneficiaque lar-
gitum, ex immensa illa populi multitudine, quæ suam gratiam
sectabatur admirans, piscatores, opifices, rusticanos, atque id
genus delegit imperitorum, qui per varias gentes missi, cuncta
illa miracula sine ullis facis atque adminiculis perpetrarent.
Verbo ille compescuit verminantium membrorum cruces: &
illi verbo compescuerunt furialium vermina passionum. Imperio
ille uno exturbavit à corporibus daemones, & exanimatis
suos restituit sensus: sub eorum tortantes (s. torquentes) & illi
se casibus (s. intusibus) jussione non aliâ sanitati & constantiæ
reddiderunt. Ille notas albicantium vitiliginum manu admoti
deterfit: lineamenta & hi corporum haud dissimili conciliaverunt
contactu. Uliginosa ille & surgentia viscera siccitatem jussit
recuperare nativam: & famuli ejus hoc modo statuerunt er-
rantes aquas, & à perniciæ corporum suos labi jussere per-
tramites. Ille ulcera oris immensi, & recusantia perpeti sa-
nitatem intra unius verbi moram continuato frenavit a pastu:
& illi haud aliter contumaciam canceris sevi ad subeundam
cicatricem circumscriptis evagationibus compulerunt. In-
cessum ille claudis dedit, visum luminibus cæcis, interem-
ptos revocavit ad vitam: nec minus & hi quoque contractio-
nem relaxavere nervorum, luce oculos implevere jam per-
diti, & ab tumulis remeare defunctos exequiarum conver-
sione jusserunt. Neque quicquam est ab illo gestum per
admirationem stupentibus cunctis, quod non omne donave-
rit faciendum parvulis illis & rusticis, & eorum subjecerit
potestati. *Arnob. adv. Gent. L. 1. p. 26, 27, 30, 31.*

uncon-

incontroul'd and unoppos'd to the last, and CHAP.
greater than had ever been wrought in the IV.
World in favour of Truth and his own Will? 
Can we think, that the Sovereign Lord of
Nature, and the merciful Preserver of Men,
could have so little regard to his own Ho-
nour, his own Laws, and the welfare of Man-
kind, as thus to give his Glory to another,
to obscure and defeat to such a Degree, the
very Evidence of his own Revelations, and
expose his Servants upon Earth to a Snare
and Temptation inevitable? For my own
part, I could as soon believe any Fable in
the Talmud, or Poets, or Al-Coran or Po-
pish Legend, as such an Hypothesis; and
shall despair of seeing any one Tenet, either
prov'd or disprov'd from the Attributes of
God, if these can be maintain'd to be con-
sistent with them.

BUT indeed the Evidence of God's im-
mediate Agency and influence in this grand
Affair is too great and striking, supposing the
Facts, to bear any dispute. For which reason
it was, as a great Prelate very justly observes
(a), that our Lord appeals to his Miracles
for clear proof of his divine Authority.
Thus to the Disciples of John the Baptist

(a) Tillotson. Vol. III. Sermon. 168. Fol.

CHAP. enquiring whether he were the *Messias*, he
 IV. says; Go and shew *John* those things, which ye
 do bear and see. The blind receive their Sight,
 the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, and
 the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised up. And
 blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in
 me. So *John* V. 36. The works which the
 Father hath given me to finish, (rather only, to
 perform) the same works that I do, bear wit-
 ness of me, that the Father hath sent me.
 Again *Ch.* X. 25. I told you, and ye be-
 lieved not; the works that I do in my Fa-
 ther's name, they bear witness of me. v. 37,
 38. If I do not the works of my Father; be-
 lieve me not; but if I do, tho' ye believe me not,
 believe the works; that ye may know, that the
 Father is in me, and I in him. And *Ch.*
 XIV. 11. Believe me for the very works sake.
 And from hence he aggravates in the strong-
 est Terms the Unbelief of the Jews, because
 they resisted this highest Evidence. Woe
 unto thee *Chorazin*, woe unto thee *Bethsaida*;
 for if the mighty works which were done in you,
 had been done in *Tyre* and *Sidon*, they would
 have repented long ago in Sackcloth and
 Ashes. — And thou *Capernaum*, which
 art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought
 down to Hell. For if the mighty works which
 have

have
 Sodom
 Day.
 XV.
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 Athens
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 XVII.
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 racles?
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 have

have been done in thee, had been done in CHAP.
Sodom, it would have remain'd until this IV.
Day. Matt. XI. 20. &c. And again John.
XV. 24. *If I had not done among them the
works, which none other Man did, they had
not had Sin; but now they have both seen,
and hated both me and my Father. So also
your favourite Apostle St Paul assures us
Rom. I. 4. That he was declar'd to be the Son
of God with Power, by that particular and
most amazing Miracle of his Resurrection
from the Dead. And in his Sermon to the
Athenians he insists with great earnestness
on this as uncontrollable Evidence. Acts.
XVII. 30. 31. God hath appointed a Day,
in which he will judge the world in Righte-
ousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained;
whereof he hath given assurance unto all Men,
in that he hath raised him from the Dead.
What could be plainer and stronger Testi-
monies than these for the Evidence by Mi-
racles? Jesus himself appeals solemnly to
them, as bearing witness, that the Father
had sent him. He requires the people to
believe in him for his very works sake, and
pronounces a dreadful Woe upon Chorazin
Bethsaida and Capernaum, for not believ-
ing and repenting; nay charges the Jews in*

CHAP. general with Sin, for the same obstinacy.

IV. But you, *Philalæthes*, tho' a *Christian* upon the foot of the *New Testament*, would persuade us, that *Miracles* prove nothing at all, and ought to have no weight or influence with any Body, as to evidencing Doctrines; being only design'd to awaken and alarm People. And 'tis pity indeed, but you had liv'd in those Days, to have comforted the poor unbelieving *Jews*, with your healing Doctrine; tho' I cannot help fancying, that if you had beheld those very works of our Lord with your own Eyes, you might perhaps have felt something like what *Spinoza* suggested of himself, when he own'd (b), that the sight alone of *Lazarus* rais'd from the Dead would have stagger'd his new Philosophy about *Miracles* extremely, and persuaded him to own our Saviour's *divine* Mission.

BEFORE I dismiss this Article, I cannot but take notice of a late artful gloss of Mr. *Chandler*'s on the words of our Saviour abovecited, which is a great Blemish in a Tract very useful and ingenious otherwise, and which nothing, I think, but immoderate fears of Superstition and *Popery* can account for in the Author. The train of

(b) See above p. 98.

Ideas, which seems to frighten Him and others unreasonably on this Subject, appears to me to be this. If Jesus Christ appeals absolutely to his *Miracles* for decisive Evidence of his Mission from God, then *Miracles may be absolute Proof* in themselves of a divine Mission; and if they *may be* such in *one* Case, then in *all* other Cases; and so we must admit the Evidence of Miracles in *Deceivers*, and that of *Popish* among the rest, and then we destroy the Authority and Use of *Reason* in Religion, and are ruin'd at once irretrievably. Now tho' in truth, there be no *real* Connection between these things, as many learned Men have shewn with the greatest perspicuity, yet such are the dismal Apprehensions of some writers; and to guard us against this terrible Calamity, we are taught a more *safe* Exposition of our Lord's words, which indeed is surprizing and curious. Our Saviour, it seems, must be understood as speaking to the *Jews* (c), and arguing *ad Homines*. They had before receiv'd *Moses* and the *Prophets* as the Messengers of God on the Evidence of Miracles, and those much inferior to the Miracles of the blessed *Jesus*; to *them* therefore Miracles

(c) Mr. Chandler's Discourse of Miracles. p. 39, 40.

CHAP. were and ought to be sufficient Evidence of
 IV. Christ's *divine* Mission, and their former
 Principles and Practice rendred them inex-
 cusable for disregarding it. So that, we are
 told, *he blames them not merely for rejecting*
the Evidence he gave of his Mission by Mira-
cles (that, it seems, they might have inno-
cently done, had they not receiv'd others be-
fore upon the same,) but because they re-
jected his Evidence, tho' it was superior to
that of all the Prophets before him; in whom
they nevertheless believ'd (d). No doubt,
 this inconsistency of Conduct was very inex-
 cusable in the *Jews*; but to say, that the *Evi-*
dence of our Saviour's Miracles in themselves
was only relative to Jews, and urg'd only as
such by our Lord himself, shews in my o-
pinion more regard to a favourite Hypothesis,
than to the natural Sense of words, and the
Honour of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour's words
are positive. The works, which I do, they
bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent
me. John. V. 36. and to the same Effect
John. X. 25. XIV. 2. Here is no restraining
or qualifying clause to the witness or Evi-
dence from his Works. He does not say,
they bear witness of me to You or the Jews;

(d) *Ibid.* p. 41.

but

but speaks in the most absolute terms, and CHAP. IV.
 could not be otherwise understood by his Audience. What Authority therefore have W
 we for inserting or supposing any such restrictions? Besides what our Lord has declared upon other Occasions, cuts off effectually all such Evasions. He says to the Jews John. X. 37, 38. *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, tho' ye believe ME not, believe the WORKS.* Where he not only tells them, what Mr. Chandler seems chiefly to regard, that he had done among them the Works, which no other Man did, but that his Works were really those of his Father, i. e. Divine; and consequently Evidence in themselves of his Mission from God. And for this reason it is, that he exhorts them with so much earnestness to believe him for the Works sake. Nay farther to clear the matter beyond all doubt, He not only reproaches and condemns the Jews in Chorazin and Beth-saida for their unbelief, but pronounces, that even to Tyre and Sidon, which had nothing to do with Moses and the Prophets, such mighty works as his were would have yielded Conviction of his Authority, and a Conviction justly grounded, and deserving Commendation.

CHAP. on. If the mighty works which were done in
 IV. you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they
 would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and
 Ashes. I say unto you, it shall be more tolera-
 ble for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judg-
 ment, than for you. Now what Colour or
 pretence can there be for applying all this
 to the Jews, only as an Argument *ad Ho-*
mines, and that with such unbecoming *Am-*
biguities and tacit *Reservations*, when the
 whole is express'd with such a Gravity and
 Solemnity, and the most indefinite empha-
 tical Terms, that could be us'd? To which
 let me add, that even supposing our Saviour
 had argued with the Jews upon their own
principles and *practise*, yet what Mr. Chan-
 dler would infer to the prejudice of Miracles,
 has still no support and foundation. For our
 Lord both *might* and certainly *would* urge
 the Argument from his *Miracles* as *sound*
 and *just*, and not only as such in *their* Opi-
 nion; otherwise if he had thought it pre-
 carious and defective in *itself*, I am per-
 swaded, he would never have press'd it up-
 on them in so strong and severe a Style, nor
 charg'd them so heavily with *Sin*, for not
 being *convinc'd* by that Evidence, which
 he knew was really in *itself* not *convincing*
 and

and *conclusive*. A behaviour so very *artificial* and *disguis'd* as this must be, comports by no means with the *Simplicity* and *Purity* of our Lord, and would reflect such Dishonour upon Him, as my Esteem and Veneration for Him will not permit me to entertain.

HOWEVER Mr. Chandler, it seems, finds several Passages in the Gospel, by which it may appear, as he says, that *whatever Stress our Lord at some times seems to have laid upon his Miracles, yet elsewhere he appeals to his word and the Doctrines he taught (e)*. He urges it as a reason, that Men should love him, or receive and believe in him, because the Word which they heard was not His, but the Father's which sent Him. John. XIV. 24. And again, That God would judge every one that should reject him, *Because I have spoken not of myself, but the Father who hath sent me, he gave me a Commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.* John XII. 49. One would wonder, how a Man of Mr. Chandler's Sagacity should cite these Passages, to prove the Point he was labouring; when it is evident at first sight, that every

(e) Chandler. *Ibid.*

CHAP. one of them is as little to his Purpose, as
 IV. any one Text in the 4 Gospels. For what
 is it, that our Saviour does in these words? Why in short he only assures his Audience, that what he said was the *Word and Will of his Father*. Now where is the *Appeal* in these Passages to his *Doctrines*, as a *Proof* of his Mission from Heaven, additional to that from his *Miracles*? Or if he had *appeal'd* to them, with any such View, where lies this additional Proof? His bare *styling* his *Word* or *Doctrine*, the *Word* or *Doctrine of his Father*, is surely not the *Proof* of its being *such*, nor even of its *Goodness* or *Excellency*. And yet the whole of what he says in these Places, amounts to no more than his *own Character* of his *Doctrine* and its *Original*. The truth is, our Saviour does here *not* speak to *Unbelievers*, as offering any Argument at all to *convince them* of his Mission from Heaven: You may see by one cast of the Eye upon the Chapters refer'd to, that *Jesus* was now discoursing with his *own Disciples*, those Men who had already believ'd on him for the sake of his *Miracles*, and he supposes in this very place, that his *Miracles* had fully evinc'd to them his *divine Authority*, and on that
 pre

presumption does here *not* appeal to any farther Evidence of it, but only instruct them more particularly in the *Nature and Quality* of his Embassy from God. So that not a Syllable is here, which diminishes the force attributed elsewhere to his Miracles.

CHAP.

IV.

BUT if this will not do, there is one Passage behind, which is to make it abundantly plain, that it was not Miracles alone, that he insisted on as sufficient proof of his Mission from God, but Miracles as wrought in Confirmation of Doctrines opposite to the Interests of Devils (f). It is the Answer of Jesus to the Jews, who said, He cast out Devils thro' Beelzebub the Chief of the Devils. Every Kingdom, says our Lord, divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every City or House divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his Kingdom stand? Matt. XII. 25, 26. Now where is there one single tittle about Doctrines in this Place? It is the Miracle itself, to which our Saviour appeals against the Jews; and he himself confines the Argument to the Miracle then before them. The very Calumny of the

(f) Chandler. p. 42.

Jews

CHAP. *Jews*, to which our Lord answers, is particular to one certain Fact, namely his casting out Devils, which they said he performed by the Assistance of *Beelzebub*. And the Reply to it here is particular likewise to the same Fact, and the whole of it runs in this form. *Every Kingdom divided against itself &c. and every City or House divided against itself will not stand.* So likewise, if *Satan cast out Satan*, he is then divided against himself: And how then shall his Kingdom stand? Implying, that as such would be the consequence of *Satan's* assisting him in casting out Devils, it was absurd and groundless to imagine, that *Satan* did or would assist him in it. And from this last Verse, it appears most evident, that our Lord did not speak at large of his *Doctrines*, that were opposite to the Interest of the Devil, but of his *Works* in that particular Case (g), corresponding in Event to active Oppositions and Counterplots in a Kingdom, City or House divided against itself. To which may be added, that the very Circumstances of the thing shew plainly enough, that our Saviour did not here refer to his *Doctrines*,

(g) See *Le Clerc. Harmon. Cap. 26. Histor. Eccles. p. 259.*

as what were opposite to the Interests of CHAP.
the Devils, but his *Action* in this Instance. IV.
He intended this Speech for *such* an An-
swer to the Calumny of the Jews, as might
directly even to those who started it shew
the Folly and Falshood of it. Now had
he refer'd to his general *Doctrine* in this
Answer, the force of it had been lost in a
great measure on those, to whom it was
directed, namely the *Scribes* or *Pharisees*
about him; because they being present to
few of his most excellent Lessons, could
not judge so well of the Argument from
them, nor would they have seen the cogent
and irrefragable Strength of it. But the
other was an obvious, palpable Case, which
they could not avoid perceiving, and with
which they might be sensibly touch'd and
affected *immediately*. It is objected indeed,
that the bare *casting out of Devils*, was no
Argument, that Satan was divided against
himself (b); but whatever Mr. Chandler may
think of it, our Lord is *express* to the con-
trary, which determines *his* meaning in this
place sufficiently; And for my part I chuse
to acquiesce in our Lord's Opinion, and
should think, it might become my Author,

(b) Chandler. *ibid.*

when

CHAP. when he sees it, to do so too; who perhaps,

IV. when he gave this Judgment, might not attend to those words of our Saviour, *If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.*

To sum up the Argument here in a few words. 1. The *Jews* did not form their Objection against the force of *Miracles* in general, but only against the force of *one kind* of Miracles, arguing from the *particular Nature and Circumstances* of that *Miracle of casting out Devils*. 2. As the Objection was form'd upon a *particular Case*, so the *Solution* of it extended no farther than to such *particular Case*: For our Lord retorted their own Argument upon them; shewing, that the very *Nature and Circumstances* of that *kind* of Miracle, to which they objected, were so far from *weakening* the force of it, as was suggested, that on the contrary they rather *improv'd* and *corroborated* it; insomuch, that the *Action alone* would shew evidently by its *Nature and Tendency*, that *He* was not in *Concert* with *Devils*, but an *Adversary* and *Superior* to those Beings. 3. These things consider'd, it is manifest that neither *Miracles* in general nor *Doctrines* in general were concern'd

in

in the *Objection* here started, or in the *Ant-CHAP.* *swen* return'd to it. It cannot be shewn, *IV.* that *Doctrines* were here introduced at all, to support the force even of that *particular* kind of Miracle: Or supposing that could be shewn, yet as the Circumstances of the Case are *particular*, no just Consequence could be drawn from thence to *Miracles* in *general*, as wanting the additional force of *Doctrine* to support their Evidence.

UPON the whole therefore all Mr. *Chandler's* *Objections* fall to the Ground; and I'm perswaded, any others would meet with as little Success; since the whole Tenor of the Gospels will be found to speak all along a quite different Language. Neither can I imagine, why any good *Christian* should be so much averse to admitting it, or what ill Consequences any Man of Judgment should ever apprehend from it. As to any Danger from hence with respect to *Impostors* or false Prophets, we need be in no sort of Pain or Concern about them. Our Saviour does not here command us to believe *all* Signs and Wonders, at *all* Times, and in *all* Circumstances; but lays this Stress on *his own* Miracles only; the *like* to which in *Nature* and *Circumstances* no Seducer
ever

CHAP. ever did or ever will produce, for the Rea-
 IV. sons I have given before in a former Chap-
 ter. We may put the same Questions to
 all such little Pretenders of *Miracles*, which
 the learned *Arnobius* (†) above 1400 Years
 ago did to those of his time. *Potestis ali-*
quem nobis designare, monstrare ex omnibus
illis Magis, qui unquam fuere per sæcula,
consmile aliquid Christo millesimâ ex parte
qui fecerit? Qui sine ullâ Vi carminum,
sine herbarum & graminum succis, sine ul-
lâ aliquâ observatione sollicitâ sacrorum, li-
baminum, temporum? — Quid simile Dii
omnes, à quibus opem dicitis agris & peri-
clitantibus latam? — Quid dicitis, O
mentes incredulæ, difficiles, duræ? alicuius
mortalium Jupiter ille Capitolinus hujusmo-
di potestatem dedit? Curionem aut Pontifi-

(†) What the ingenious Mr. Warburton has said lately of
Arnobius, as undertaking the Defense of Christianity before
 he understood it, must be interpreted of the Christian System
 as to Doctrines and Precepts; which it is not to be wondred,
 if he was not perfectly acquainted with, since he wrote his
 Books, before he was admitted by Baptism into the Church,
 and fully instructed in those Points. But as to the general
 Evidence of Christianity, that he understood very well, and
 by his Knowledge and serious Consideration of it embrac'd
 the Faith in that discouraging Season, the Reign of *Diocle-*
sian.

cem Maximum, quinimmo Dialem, quod (k) CHAP.
 ejus est, Plaminem isto jure donavit? — IV.
 Experiri libet et recognoscere, an cum suis
 efficere Diis possunt, quod ab rusticis Christia-
 nis jussionibus factitatum est nudis (l).

To proceed now with our Evidence, *Phila-
 laethes*; could the Miracles of Jesus Christ,
 in themselves consider'd, admit of any doubt
 as to their Author, which in reason they
 could not; yet if we take into the account
 the Religion, in Confirmation of which they
 were wrought, we have then incontestible,
 and I may say *demonstrative* Evidence for
 the *divine* Authority of both. You con-
 tend yourself more than once, that the Doc-
 trine of *Jesus Christ* was the purest System
 of Religion, that could be preach'd to a sin-
 ful World; that hereby we are recover'd
 from a State of gross Ignorance and Dark-
 ness, to the true knowledge of God and our-
 selves, and to all those Moral Obligations and
 Relations, which we stand in to the Supreme
 Being and to one another. From a great
 Uncertainty concerning a future State, and
 the concern of Divine Providence in the

(k) So I read it, not quod the relative, as others under-
 stand it.

(l) *Arnob. adv. Gent. L. I. p. 25, 28, 31. 32.*

CHAP. Government of the World, we are furnish'd

IV. with clearer conceptions, and brought to a more satisfactory Way of reasoning about those Matters; that we are redeem'd or deliver'd from the prevailing Power and Dominion, and consequently from the Punishment and Condemnation of Sin, by the clear Light, the powerful Motives, and the effectual Aids and Assistances, with which we are bless'd under the Gospel Dispensation. p. 143, 392.

Now if so, it is a flat Contradiction and Absurdity to suppose, that any *Evil* Beings, who as *such* must delight in the Corruption and Misery, not the Holiness, Light, and Happiness of Mankind, and who must always have a fix'd Malignity and Enmity to God and Truth, should employ *their* Power to effect such extraordinary Works, for the attesting and propagating a Religion of such excellent Tendency. For this would be to suppose them acting wilfully and directly against their own Schemes and Interests, and labouring to destroy their own Influence, and subvert their own Authority, i. e. in other words, to be chang'd from what they are in Temper, Designs, and Character, and no longer to be *Evil* Beings; contrary to the first Supposition. But if these Beings must

must necessarily be out of the Question, CHAP. IV.
 then we must recur immediately either to God himself, or at least (which amounts to the same) to good Ministers under him, acting by *his* Direction, and in constant Obedience to *his* Will. And since 'tis certain, that whoever worketh Miracles by the Power and Assistance of God, has the plain Testimony of God to his Mission from him, and of course to the Doctrine, which he preaches in *his* Name, and since it is indisputable, that God cannot give a *direct* and positive Testimony to a *Falsbood* or *Imposture*, especially to one impossible, as this must be, to be ever *discover'd* by Men, it follows as clearly as any Demonstration in *Metaphysics* or *Morality*, that the Mission and Doctrine of Jesus Christ was truly *Divine* in its Original and Authority. And all this without limitation to particular parts or portions of it, but throughout the whole, in every Point and Article of it, for the same reason that any one tittle of it appears to be *Divine*; because the Testimony of God by Miracles was given indiscriminately to *all* without Exception, to one part no less than another, whether *speculative* or *practical*, *moral* or *positive*, confirm'd all equally

CHAP. qually or alike by the Holy and unerring Almighty; which the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God would not suffer to be done, if any one point of his Doctrine had been *false*, or *disagreeable* in any measure to the *divine Will*.

THE same reasonings and conclusions would be applicable thus far to the *works* and *Doctrines* of the Apostles, *i. e.* to those who were sent abroad by *Jesus* himself, to publish to the World, the very same Religion that *He* had before taught, and communicated to them; and who were endued for that purpose with *special Assistances* from God, and the most illustrious Miracles to attest their Authority. But here, I perceive, *Philetus*, you and I are sure to be at variance again; for granting the Fact of such miraculous powers in *Jesus* and his Apostles (I joyn these together, because your Arguments strike equally at both) to be true, you will tell us, that these cannot prove them to be both *infallible* and *impeccable*, to be set above the possibility of being deceived themselves or deceiving others; and therefore we can trust 'em no farther, than the evident Truth and Righteousness of their Doctrines themselves will carry us, and where this fails

we

we must stop (m), having no sufficient Proof CHAP. IV.
as to other Points, the Truth of which does not plainly appear to our Understandings, from the Nature of the things themselves. 
All this I consider'd before in the abstract, when I treated of Miracles in general (n); and without repeating minutely, what I there observ'd, I shall only in short apply the general Principles before laid down, to the present particular Case. I say therefore, as to your *impeccable* and *infallible*, the whole difficulty and Fallacy lies in a confus'd ambiguous Use of those terms. *Impeccability*, as it signifies an absolute *Perfection* and Integrity of *Will*; and *Infallibility*, as that signifies an absolute *Perfection* of *Understanding*, are Qualities, no doubt, inherent in the *Divinity* alone, as being the *sole* Prerogative and peculiar Attributes of God. And consequently as *Miracles* do not alter the original *Nature* of *Men*, so neither can they render or prove mere *Men* to be *impeccable* and *infallible* in the high Sense above-mention'd. Thus far we are easily agreed; and I allow, that *Men* as *such* are not by *Miracles* set above the *physical* possibility of

(m) Mor. Philos. p. 9, 92, 93.

(n) See Chap. II.

CHAP. being either *deceiv'd themselves or of deceiving others.* But then your *inference* from

IV. *this against the certain Evidence of Miracles* *tous* in the present Case, is what I deny and undertake to disprove. For I affirm, that as Men, tho' not *absolutely perfect* in *Understanding* and *Will* like God himself, *may* yet in particular instances neither *err* themselves, nor wilfully *impose* upon others, in what they *teach* or *report*; so Miracles *prove* to us in particular Instances, that the workers of them *do not actually err* or wilfully *deceive* others, in what they *teach* or *report* as *divine Truth*. And my reason for it is, as I have shewn above, that *Miracles* are here a *Testimony* of God himself, to what the workers of them *preach* to the World in *his Name*; and his *Testimony* is such, that we can never in any Case be *deceiv'd* by it. So that in reality, it is the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God, that we *trust* in such Cases, not either the *Ability* or *Integrity* of mere Men; let them be in themselves both *fallible* and *peccable*, capable both of being *deceiv'd* themselves and of *deceiving* others; yet as God is *infallible* and *impeccable*, and does here *infallibly* give his *Testimony* to the *Doctrines* of Men his *authoris'd* Ministers,

Ministers, we are sure of no *Deceit* and *CHAP.*
Error in their Instructions. Thus also *IV.*
 with respect to Jesus Christ and his Apostles;
 the *first* thing we learn and are assur'd
 of from their *Miracles* is this, that they
 spoke and acted by *divine* Authority; and
 in the next place, from the uninterrupted
 Continuance of their Miracles, without
 controul or opposition, that they *actually*
did not err or *deceive* in any article of Doc-
 trine, which they preach'd to the World as
Truth in the name of God. The difference
 of Subjects, upon which they discours'd
 with *Jews* or *Gentiles*, made no variation or
 diminution in their *divine Credentials*;
 these were always the same; during the
 whole course of their Ministry, whether
Jesus or his Apostles discours'd of their own
Quality and *Authority*, or of the Knowledge
 and Worship of the true God, or of the
 means and terms of God's reconciliation
 with Sinners, whether of *Moral* Duties or
positive Institutions, of the next World or
 the present. In all this variety of Doctrine,
 they appear with the same *divine Testimony*
 of Signs and Wonders, and go on to the
 End in the name and power of God, with-
 out rebuke or correction from above. Now

CHAP. what can be collected from hence, but that
 IV. in *all* things, which they deliver'd as *Truth*,
 they deliver'd nothing else but *Truth*, as
 they were directed and commission'd by
 God to do; and that those to whom they
 preach'd, were oblig'd to receive *all* they
 taught and enjoyn'd, as the *will* and *word*
 of God? There being no room for Men to
 distinguish *Divine* from *Human*, where
 God attested the *whole* without Distinc-
 tion (e).

UPON these grounds therefore it is, that
 we *may* and *must*, if their Miracles prove
 any thing at all, trust Christ and his Apost-
 les much farther, than the evident *Truth*
 and *Righteousness* of their *Doctrines* will
 carry us. For 'tis solely from their Mira-
 cles, not the nature of the *Doctrines*, that
 a *divine Authority* is prov'd in any part of their

(e) I would not however be understood in thus joyning our
 Saviour and his Apostles together, to *equal* or even *compare*
 them in Point of real *Dignity* and *Authority*; for I am sensi-
 ble enough of the infinite Preeminence of our Lord above
 his Ministers in all Respects. But here I consider only what
 appears *immediately* and *directly* from their Miracles, which
 is a *divine Authority* in *all* their *Doctrines*, relating to *Faith*
 or *Manners*; And when this *first* Point is once evinc'd and
 establish'd on solid grounds, then are all *particular* Articles of
 our Faith to be deduc'd as *consequences* of the other, and that
 of our Lord's *Divinity* among the rest.

religious

religious System: The *Moral* of itself carries no *such* Evidence along with it, any more than Doctrines of another kind, whatever Evidence of *Truth* it may give us, superior to the rest. The character and quality of *coming from God* by a special *Revelation*, appears to us in *all* from the same common *Testimony* of Signs and Wonders; and if your Argument from *impeccable* and *infallible* is really of any force, it affects all their Doctrines indifferently; and we may be *deceiv'd* as to the *divine Authority* of your *Moral* Instructions, as well as that of any other. So that in short we *can* either depend upon their Miracles for the *Authority* of *no* sort of Doctrines, or else we may depend upon the same for *all*; there being no Medium between these two Positions, but what is merely arbitrary, and arising from Humour or Fiction, without Evidence.

To conclude then; it is for these reasons, that we who believe the history of the Gospel, and the glorious Testimonies given by God to the Blessed *Jesus*, from his Birth to his Ascension into Heaven, believe also every tittle of Doctrine *suppos'd* to come from Him, and obey every Precept and injunction of his as *Divine*, whatever be the Subject

CHAR.
IV.

CHAP. Subject Matter of it. Because we see no-
 IV. thing in the *whole* of it contradictory to any
 one Principle of right Reason, and no one
 part *less approv'd* and *attested* by God than
 another. His Miracles before his Passion, and
 his Resurrection and Ascension after it, with
 the gifts of the Holy Ghost to his Disciples,
 are the great *Seals* of his Father to every
 Article, which he preach'd to the World
 while on Earth; they loudly proclaim Him
 the faithful Messenger of the most High,
 full of *Grace* and *Truth*. For the like rea-
 sons also, we believe and observe the Doc-
 trine of the Apostles, because their Errand
 and Office was to instruct the World in the
reveal'd Will of God, and for this very
 End did God *bear them witness with Signs*
and Wonders, and guided them by the Holy
 Spirit into all Evangelical Truth. Other-
 wise let any Man explain, how the primary
End of all their Miracles, Gifts, and Minis-
 try itself would be answer'd. These would
 all be *in vain*, did not God so enlighten
 their *Understandings*, and overrule their *Wills*,
 or so restrain the *use* of their *supernatural*
 Gifts, as effectually to secure them from
Error and *Fraud* in the delivery of his Will,
 and qualify them perfectly for the Instruc-
 tion

tion of his people in Truth and Righteous-
ness. This we may presume *a priori* from
the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God, upon whose
Care and Providence we may safely rely for
preserving such extraordinary Talents from
a mischievous Abuse, and guarding us from
all Impositions by a *weak* or *wicked* Misap-
plication of his own miraculous Powers.

CHAP.
IV.
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AND these conclusions, *Philaletbes*, are
so very plain and indisputable, that a smart
ingenious Writer of your acquaintance, not
addicted in the least to any Excesses in Faith,
could not avoid acknowledging the justness
of them. "The Miracles, says he, upon
"which the Truth of the Christian Religion
"is founded, were wrought to prove not
"the Infallibility of the Apostles *faculties*,
"but the *certain infallible Truth* of the
"Doctrines they taught; and tho' the A-
"postles might *possibly* have err'd, or been
"mistaken concerning any supernatural Re-
"velation made to them, in *itself* consider'd:
"yet since they had the Power of working
"Miracles given them, to confirm the Truth
"of the Doctrines they had receiv'd; and
"since also it *was impossible*, that God
"should set his Seal to a Lie, or suffer any
"*false Doctrine* to be confirm'd by such nu-
"merous

CHAP.

IV.



“merous Miracles, without controuling
 “them by a *superior* power; from *hence* the
 “Apostles had as infallible a knowledge or
 “certainty of the Truth of the Doctrines,
 “as they could have of their own Existence,
 “and the Being of a God. And it was
 “plainly from this *infallible* objective Evi-
 “dence of Miracles, proving the *infallible*
 “Truth and certainty of the Doctrines, that
 “Christianity grew and prevailed, and that
 “the Apostles were receiv’d as *infallible*
 “Teachers (p). To the same purpose Mr.
 Le Clerc in a Tract abounding with freedom
 of Thought. “Some may ask perhaps,
 “whether it *might* not so happen, that the
 “Apostles might abandon the *truth* of the
 “Gospel, and preach a *false* Doctrine; and
 “if it *might* be so, how we can be assur’d,
 “that they were not *deceivers*. I confess,
 “that tho’ it was very unlikely, that after
 “having receiv’d so many illuminations and
 “graces, they should fall into Apostacy;
 “yet it was not *absolutely impossible*. But
 “in that Case God would not have approv’d
 “by *Miracles* the Doctrine they taught;
 “and *thereby* it is we may know they were
 “no *Seducers*. There crept in, during their

(p) Dr. Morgan. Tracts. p. 84, 85.

“time

“time many *false* Prophets among the
 “Christians, but they were presently dis-
 “cover’d, because they could not maintain
 “by *Miracles* a Doctrine contrary to that
 “of the Apostles, which was *confirm’d* by
 “an Infinity of *Wonders*. God made it appear
 “by those prodigies, that the Apostles de-
 “clar’d *nothing* but was conformable to his
 “*Will*, nor *any* thing, that could be hurt-
 “ful to Piety; for it is impossible that God
 “should favour a Doctrine, which should
 “turn Men from Holiness (g). And a-
 “gain in another Tract. “They taught not
 “their Doctrine, as mere *Philosophers* or
 “*Divines*, but as Men *authoris’d* by Hea-
 “ven; they were therefore to convince
 “Men, that they were *sent* from God. To
 “prove it *undeniably*, there was no better
 “way, than to do some things above the
 “Laws of Nature, which were *sensible Signs*
 “of God’s *approving* their *Doctrine*, and
 “whereby they *undeniably prov’d*, that
 “they were his *Messengers*. — When
 “Men saw, that after they had appeal’d to
 “the Maker of the World for the *Truth*
 “of what they said, that there happen’d at
 “their Prayers some things, which were above

(g) *Le Clerc. Five Letters. &c. p. 70, 71.*

“ the

CHAP. the Power of all Men and all natural Cau-

IV. "ses, they could not doubt, but God declar'd
 "himself in their behalf; especially if they
 "consider'd, that the Doctrine they preach'd
 "was most worthy of Him (r). To which
 he adds in his riper Years. *Spiritui per A-*
postolos loquenti non minus credendum, ac Pa-
tri & Filio, & per Omnia parendum. Id. De
 Eligend. Sentent. §. IV. p. m. 331. So that
 granting these Men to be real *Apostles*, and
 furnish'd with the Gifts and Powers above-
 mention'd, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had o-
 ther standing Evidence for the *Truth* and
Authority of their Doctrines, besides that
 which might arise from the *nature of the*
things themselves. viz. the constant, uniform
Testimony of God himself, *common*, as I said,
 to *all* their Doctrines indifferently, and con-
 tinuing with 'em to the End. Otherwise,
 had their Doctrine been *false* in *any* Arti-
 cle, the *divine* Being, in whose Name they
 acted, would have certainly interpos'd in
 some way or other to discover it; because
 the Error and Imposition would in this
 Case to the *Wise*st and most *virtuous* Men
 have been absolutely *invincible*, supposing

(r) Id. Lett. II. post Caus. of Incredul. p. 326, 327.
 Conf. Ejust. Hist. Eccl. An. 101.

as I do, no Point advanc'd contradictory to CHAP. the clear principles of Reason; which the IV. Goodness of God would never have permitted, as that would in all respects be the very same thing, as if God did work Miracles himself to deceive Mankind.

LET us see now, *Philaethes*, whether any other Objections of your's will invalidate what has been said. You alledge, "That there was no pretence in those Apostolical Times to any Spirit or Holy Ghost, that made Men either *infallible* or *impeccable*; that set Men above the possibility of erring or being deceiv'd themselves as to the inward judgment, or of *deceiving* others in the outward sentence and declaration of that Judgment. This was the wild and impudent Claim of the Church of *Rome* in after-Ages, which the *Apostles* themselves, who really had the Holy Ghost and the power of working Miracles never pretended to. And tho' this has been liberally granted them, and suppos'd of them by our Christian Zealots and *System-Mongers*, yet it is what they never claim'd.

p. 80. Very true, there was no *pretense* in those times to any Spirit, that made Men *infallible* and *impeccable*, if you mean by the

CHAP. the one, endued with a *perfect knowledge* of
 IV. *all things at once*, and incapable of *erring* in
 any Point whatsoever; and by the other,
incapable of ever acting amiss in any Case,
 and rais'd above all the *Passions* and *infirmi-*
ties of *Human Nature*. And who those
Zealots and *System-Mongers* are, that have
liberally granted thus much to the *Apostles*,
 or ever *suppos'd* it of them, for my part I
 am utterly ignorant. Nay your Friend a-
 bovecited is so *liberal* even to the *Church of*
Rome, as to assure us, that such was never
 the *wild and impudent Claim* of *St. Peter's*
Chair(s). We are therefore not concern'd
 with *this* *Infallibility* and *Impeccability*;
 not a single *Zealot* or *System*, that I can per-
 ceive, being answerable for it. But as we
 renounce these extravagant *Claims* of one
 side, so I make no scruple to assert on the
 other, that the *Apostles* did in virtue of
 their *Office*, and miraculous *Gifts* of the *Spi-*
rit, *pretend* (and that justly) to those *Quali-*
ties in *such a degree*, as to become *infalli-*
ble *Guides* (neither *erring* nor *deceiving*)
 in all which they deliver'd to the *World* as
Truth and the *Will* of *God*. This *Prero-*
gative above other *Human Teachers* I shall

(s) Dr. Morgan, *Tracts*. p. 89, 242.

freely bestow upon them; *Pbilatethes*, unpurified in the least by your blustering Language; especially having such an Ally on my side as *Dr. Morgan*, declaring so roundly to the like effect, that "doubtless they were infallible, in whatever they deliver'd as the Mind and Will of God, concerning Men's Duty, and the Way and Means of Salvation (†). And my reasons for this assertion, are, because from the Nature and End of their Office they could not avoid claiming so much to themselves, and because I find them in the *New Testament* so strongly and directly claiming it to themselves, and because I am assur'd by the constancy and greatness of their Miracles, that what they did claim to themselves, did truly and certainly belong to them. Let us hear therefore, what the great *St. Paul* has declared on this head. In his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* he speaks thus. *My Speech and my Preaching (was or is) not with enticing words of Man's wisdom, (i. e. not with the artificial Eloquence and Subtlety of your Schools) but with Demonstration of the*

(†) Tracts p. 9.

CHAP. *Spirit and Power* (u). i. e. as I understand

IV. it, with a Language more engaging and operative abundantly, *from the Spirit of God*

- residing in me, and the wonderful Powers communicated to me, and display'd by me (x) *That your Faith might not be in the Wisdom of Men* (i. e. might not be wrought by common Human Methods of Persuasion) but in or by the Power of God accompanying and enforcing my words. — *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery* (i. e. the great Mystery of our Redemption by Jesus Christ) *even the hidden Wisdom* — which none of the Princes of this World (either among the Jewish great Doctors or your Philosophers) knew, but which God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth out all things, even the τὰ βὰθ τῷ Θεῷ, the most profound Depths of God. *We have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words*

(u) The *Æthiopic* Interpreter omitting the 2 last words, against all other Versions and MSS. is not to be regarded.

(x) So *Le Clerc*. In rationibus à Dei Spiritu & miraculis depromptis. Hist. Eccles. p. 395. Vid. etiam Additament. Hammondian. in loc.

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(y) See
(z) 1. Cor.
(a) Ephes.
(c) 1. Cor.

which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; explaining suitably (so I chuse to render the Sentence (y) the things (or Instructions) of the Spirit in the Language of the Spirit (z). And again in his Epistle to the Ephesians; He tells them, that the Mystery of Christ, which in other Ages was not made known to the Sons of Men, is now revealed unto his Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit (a). Nay he ventures to style his own Doctrine the Word of God. For this cause, says he, thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of MEN, but as it is in truth, the word of GOD (b). In another place, what he writes, are nothing less than Commandments of the Lord. If any Man be a Prophet or Spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you, are the Commandments of the Lord (c). In others his Gospel is the Gospel of God. 2 Cor. XI. 7. 1 Theff. II. 2, 8, 9. 1 Tim. I. 10. Nay the Gospel, according to which God

(y) See Wolf. Critic. in loc.

(z) 1 Cor. II. 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13.

(a) Ephes. III. 5.

(b) 1 Theff. II. 13.

(c) 1 Cor. XIV. 37.

CHAP. will judge those Men who are under the
 IV. Law (d). To all which he adds a severe
 Threatning against those who should slight
 his Directions, as *despising not Man but God,*
 1 Thess. IV. 8. *He that despiseth, despiseth*
not Man but God, who hath given unto us
his Holy Spirit.

Is there no Pretence now in these Passages to any Spirit, that made St. Paul infallible in his Doctrine and Ministry? Can any Man imagine, that he would talk of himself in this high and authoritative Strain, that he would call his own Instructions the *Commandments of the Lord, the Word and Gospel of God &c.* if he had thought himself subject to Error in his preaching or writing like other Men? Would he affirm, that the *Wisdom and the Mysteries of God* were revealed to himself and the *Apostles*, and that *he and they* deliver'd them not in the words which *Human Wisdom teacheth*, but which *the Spirit teacheth*, and that he had received *that Spirit*, which *searcheth out and knoweth the deep things of God*, if he knew himself unassisted and uninstructed supernaturally by the Holy Ghost? And all this, under the

(d) Rom. II. 12, 16.

most solemn and repeated Appeals (e) to CHAP.
God for the *Truth* of what he said? Impos- IV.
sible! St. Paul was too sensible of Human
Frailties and Imperfections, too modest,
humble, and sincere a Man, to assume to
himself an *Authority* more than *human*, to
require an absolute Obedience to his word
as to an *Oracle* of God, unless the Spirit of
God had really been with him, and guided
him with the brightest Illumination in
all these Discourses; i.e. in other words, had
rendred him *infallible* in all that he preach-
ed as *Truth* and the Will of God.

NEITHER were these extraordinary Gifts
and Powers peculiar to him, but imparted e-
qually to those, who were joyn'd in the same
Office with Him, and consequently requir'd
the same *divine* Assistances for a faithful Dis-
charge of it, viz. the other *Apostles*. They
too like St. Paul were to preach the Gospel
of Jesus Christ to an Unbelieving and stub-
born Generation, they were also sent abroad
for the *perfecting of the Saints*, and *edifying*
the Church of God; and to this End did God
bear them witness with Signs and Wonders,
with divers Miracles and gifts of the Holy
Ghost, as the Author to the Hebrews assures

(e) Gal. I. 20. 1 Thess. II. 3. 4. 5.

CHAP. II. 4. Accordingly St. Paul himself
 IV. acknowledges, that the *mystery of Christ*
 was revealed by the Spirit to the holy Apostles
 in general, and that the Saints or household of
 God were built upon the foundation of the A-
 postles and Prophets, Ephes. II. 20. And the
 highest Character, to which he ever aspires
 after his Conversion, is that of an *Apostle*,
 with which he supposes several others before
 him were invested, and to whom as such he
 claims only an *Equality* in Graces and Dig-
 nity. From hence it was, that *James, Cephas,*
 and *John*, those who, as he says, were es-
 teem'd *Pillars of the Church*, gave to him and
Barnabas the right hand of Fellowship, i.e.
 owned him for a Brother-Apostle and Fel-
 low-Labourer in the Gospel, when they per-
 ceiv'd the Grace that was given unto him.
 Galat. II. 9. And hence it was, that Peter
 call'd the Gospel preach'd by Him and others
 to the Christians dispers'd through *Pontus,*
Galatia, &c. the word of the Lord which a-
 bideth for ever. 1. Pet. I. 23. 25. as being
 publish'd and ministr'd to them by the Holy
 Spirit. Ibid. v. 12. And in his second Epis-
 tle, He thus exhorts his new Disciples in
 most emphatical Terms, *That ye may be*
mindful of the Commandments of the Apostles

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(f) I
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 Sherlock.

cles of our (f) Lord and Saviour. 2 Pet III. CHAP.

2. Agreeably to which St. John pronounces, IV.

He that knoweth God, beareth us; he that is not of God beareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error.

1 John. IV. 6. Now does all this sound like the Speech of Men, who never pretended to any *Infallible* direction of the Holy Spirit, as you seem to insinuate? I would know then, what tolerable Sense can be given to the Passages abovesaid, and how it comes to pass, that so much stress is laid on their Quality of *Apostles of Jesus Christ*. Indeed they never use the very word *infallible*, but they use several phrases equivalent to it, and claim evidently to themselves as much Authority, as if they were really so; and such was their Simplicity and Integrity, such their abhorrence of all Presumption and Arrogance, that had they been wholly destitute of *all* Infallibility, they never would have us'd Expressions, that might naturally and necessarily imply it. In short the very *Gifts of the Spirit* enumerated by St. Paul

(f) I follow here the Correction and Translation of the words, which an eminent Prelate has given us, in an excellent *Dissertation* on this Epistle of St. Peter. See Bp. Sherlock. *Use and Intent of Prophecy*. p. m. 194, 195.

CHAP. I. Cor. XII. are sufficient to prove this
 IV. Point beyond Contradiction. Such are the
 word of wisdom and knowledge, and the gift
 of discerning Spirits i. e. the true and divine
 from false and diabolical. v. 8. 10. To one,
 says he, i. e. among the common Christians
 is given the word of Wisdom, to another the
 word of Knowledge by the same Spirit; To
 another the discerning of Spirits. Now all
 these Gifts were undoubtedly, as Chrysostom
 well observes (g), confer'd in the most emi-
 nent Degree on the Apostles (h), whose Office
 and Character above all others requir'd an
 extraordinary measure of each; for it can-
 not be supposed, that such Gifts of the Spi-
 rit were bestow'd on inferior Believers, and
 denied to those, who were the Pillars of
 the Church, and were appointed to deliver
 the standing Rule of Faith and Manners to
 all the Disciples, and whose principal Bu-
 siness it was to detect and expose false Pro-
 phets creeping in unawares, and to prevent

(g) Τὸς Ἀποστόλους πρῶτον, οἱ τὰ πάντα ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἔχον τὰ
 χαρίσματα. Chrysostom. in 1 Cor. Hom. 32. p. 449. Ed.
 Sav. Conf. Hammond. in v. 10.

(h) Erant sine dubio, qui pluribus generibus istiusmodi
 donorum instructi erant, ut Apostoli, in quos omnia fuerant
 collata. Le Clerc. Hist. Eccl. p. 394.

any mischievous Delusions and Corrup-
 tions. And if they were really possess'd of
 these Gifts, if the Spirit did endue them
 with *Wisdom and Knowledge* from above,
 how could they be otherwise than *infalli-
 bly wise and knowing*, as to all matters in
 which they were instructed by the Spirit?
 To what Purpose and End in this Case
 would *Wisdom and Knowledge* be thus gi-
 ven *supernaturally*, if it were no more cer-
 tain and *unerring*, than *wisdom and know-
 ledge* without the Spirit? And how could
 they be enabled, to *discern true Spirits* from
false ones by an extraordinary Gift of the
 Spirit, without discerning them *infallibly*?
 Take away *infallibility*, and then the Gift
 comes to nothing, or at least would prove
 of little use, and insufficient for the very
 End propos'd by it. To which let me add,
 that the Apostles had farther grounds for
 such pretensions and expectations, from
 expresse promises of their Lord and Master.
 He told them, that *his Father should give
 them another Comforter, that might abide
 with them for ever, even the Spirit of Truth;*
*whom the world could not receive. That He
 should teach them all things, and bring all
 things to their Remembrance, whatsoever he*
had

CHAP. had said unto them, John. XIV. 16, 17, 26.

IV. And again. *That when the Spirit of Truth is come, he should guide them into all Truth.* i. e. *All Truth*, which it concern'd them as his *Apostles* to know, and to publish to the World. Ch. XIV. 12, 13. Let me ask now, in what probable Sense the Apostles could expect to be guided into all Truth, by the Spirit of Truth, without being guided infallibly into it? How could they or any one else suppose, that a divine Spirit would act any otherwise, than after a divine manner, i. e. *unerringly* in every Truth, into which it was pleas'd to guide these Ministers of God? I am well aware, *Philaethes*, of the artful Glosses and Exceptions, which some have started on this head, and when they are reviv'd upon me, I may think myself concern'd to examine them attentively. I shall only observe at present, that even the Author of the famous Letters on *Inspiration*, allow'd the Apostles to have had many immediate Inspirations and extraordinary Revelations by the Spirit, and that so far as these went, they were render'd infallible (i). Nay so fully was he perswaded of that, that he could not think him a good Christian, who

(i) Letters on Inspiration. p. 62, 67.

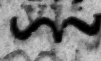
doubted

doubted of it. And his *ingenuous Confession* as **CHAP.**
to 1 Cor. XII. 8. is particularly remarkable. **IV.**

“I must, says he, ingenuously confess, that
“there is mention made in this Epistle of
“some miraculous Gifts, which seem to
“have been pure Inspirations; and which
“ought to make the Speakers attended so,
“as if they were the simple Interpreters of
“the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, says St. Paul,
“gives to one the word of Wisdom, to another
“the word of Knowledge. — This seems
“contrary to what I have been saying, and
“I confess I cannot see how according to
“my notion, this difficulty can be clearly
“solved. However he does attempt a So-
lution of it, such as it is, which is too per-
plex’d and weak to need a Confutation;
especially since to me it appears very plain,
that the Author himself upon second
Thoughts in his riper Years, had much bet-
ter Notions in this and several other Arti-
cles advanc’d in those Letters. But you,
Philaethes, are a bolder Man, and deny, as
far as I can perceive, their infallibility in
any Point and at any time, and would needs
perswade us, that the Apostles themselves
did *never* pretend to it; which will be found
to be just as *wild* and extravagant on one
side,

CHAP. side, as the *claims* of the Church of Rome on
IV. the other.

HOWEVER to prevent our trusting too much to their Gifts and Pretensions, you refer us to some very extraordinary *Facts*, as greatly detracting from their Authority. You tell us, that "in the Apostolic Age" "the *false Prophets* and *Teachers* had the "extraordinary *Gifts* and *Powers* as well "as the *true*. And consequently, such Miraculous Powers could be no Evidence of Truth and sound Doctrine. p. 9, 81. But I answer directly, that what you assert is utterly groundless, if you mean by *as well* in the *same* Degree of *Magnitude* and *Permanency*, and *while* the Possessors of them acted as *false Prophets* and Seducers. For it does not appear by any proper Evidence, that such miraculous Gifts and Powers were vested in the Age you speak of in any *False-Teachers* amongst the Christians, while they acted *as such*; and if you can name to me one of this Stamp among *Jewish* or *Gentile* Deceivers of those times, and one true *Gift* of the Spirit or Miracle, by which they confirm'd their *false* Doctrine, I may venture to give up the Cause. Neither St. Paul nor St. Peter, nor St. Jude, nor St. John, who

who often speak in the sharpest Terms of **CHAP.**
the *false Apostles* and *false Teachers* in their **IV.**
Days, give us once the least Account of 
their working Miracles; nor do they ever,
which is quite unaccountable otherwise,
caution Believers against being deluded and
imposed upon by *such Works*. And what
is particularly remarkeable, St. Paul when
he prophesies of the *Man of Sin*, whose
coming in future Times would be with *Signs*
and *lying Wonders* after the working of Sa-
tan(k), is quite silent as to the *Signs* and
Wonders of any Seducers at *that* time, or
any others besides the great *Antichrist*, to
be *reveal'd* hereafter. Is not this now very
strange and surprizing, if the *false Prophets*
had *then* abounded, or were *soon* to abound
with miraculous Powers, as you represent
them? And is it not more surprizing still,
that St. Peter (l) 15 Years after this at
least (m), St. Jude and St. John about 40,
should in their Descriptions of these Delin-
quents never drop a Syllable, by way of
Caveat against Deceptions by their Signs
and Wonders? What could be the mean-

(k) 2 Thess. II. 3. &c.

(l) 2 Pet. II.

(m) See Mill. Proleg. p. 2. 15. Ed. Kust.

Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. Tom. IH. p. 157, 165.

CHAP. ing of this Conduct, but a want of such
 IV. Powers in those Men? For had they spoke
 with Tongues, heal'd Diseases, and rais'd
 the Dead to Life, like the true Disciples
 and Ministers of Christ, the Apostles could
 not well avoid taking notice of their spe-
 cious Pretences, and offering some particu-
 lar and present Antidote to that sort of
 Poyson. Instead of this we have not so
 much as a Hint or Allusion to any such
 thing in all their Writings, except only in
 the Case of a distant future Antichrist.
 Which perswades me, that either these Se-
 ducers never were possess'd of any extra-
 ordinary Gifts and Powers; or if any of
 them did at first upon their Baptism and
 Profession of Christianity receive any Por-
 tion of such Gifts, they were after-
 wards totally deprived of what they had
 before from the Holy Spirit. Now that
 both these Cases are very possible, ap-
 pears from hence. The Gifts of the Holy
 Ghost, as Dr. Hammond (*) and others have
 observ'd, were not conferr'd on all Belie-
 vers promiscuously, nor by every Person
 in the Ministry. An Instance of the latter
 we have in Philip the Deacon, who was en-

(*) Hammond. in Act. Apost. H. 38. Ed. Critic.

dued himself with a Power of working Mi-
 racles, and the People of Samaria hearing
 and seeing the Miracles which he wrought
 among them, gave heed with one accord unto
 those things, which Philip spake, and
 beleving were Baptiz'd both Men and Wo-
 men (o). But they did not immediately re-
 ceive the Holy Ghost from Philip; but af-
 terwards when the Apostles heard, that Sa-
 maria had receiv'd the word of God, they
 sent unto them Peter and John; who when
 they were come down prayed for them, that
 they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then, we
 are told, they laid their Hands upon them,
 and they receiv'd the Holy Ghost (p). At the
 same time Simon Magus, who beholding the
 Miracles and Signs which were done by Phi-
 lip, wondered and believed also and was bap-
 tiz'd, appears to have had no share in those
 Gifts of the Spirit, being told by St. Peter,
 when he offer'd money for the high Aposto-
 lical Power, Thou hast neither part nor lot
 in this Matter; for thine Heart is not right
 in the Sight of God (q). Which sentence
 of St. Peter upon him is undoubtedly to be
 interpreted, as excluding him not only

(o) *Act. VIII. 5, 6.*

(p) *Ibid. v. 14, &c.*

(q) *Ibid. v. 13, 21.*

from

CHAP. from any *lot or part* in the Apostolical Powers, but from those likewise communicated to the other Believers; since the Apostles, who knew the Corruption of his Heart, saw him equally unworthy both of the one and the other, and therefore most certainly would not *lay their Hands* upon him for that purpose. Now as that *false Teacher Simon Magus* was thus debarr'd of these *extraordinary Gifts*, why might not other false Christians of the same corrupt Dispositions and Designs, such as *Hermogenes, Phygellus, Alexander, Hymenæus, &c.* be debarr'd from the same in the like manner? Especially as its generally agreed, that even the *true Believers* were not *all* endued with such Powers. Those Seducers might perhaps, as *Simon* had done in *Samaria*, amuse and astonish the Vulgar with some juggling Tricks, or *magical Operations*; but what are these to the *spiritual Powers* of the Christians, which even in *Simon's Eyes* appear'd so excellent and wonderful, that he could not help wishing to gain them, and vainly and wickedly offering a large Sum for the purchase of them? And to confirm this account, there is extant a remarkable passage in *Irenæus*, wherein he

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tells us from his own knowledge, that while CHAP. IV
miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit flourish'd in great abundance, and were daily experienc'd among true Believers of the Church; the followers of *Simon Magus*, and other Seducers were absolutely destitute of any such; and could not like the pious and sound Christian heal one natural Disease, or accidental hurt of the Body, nor restore either Sight to the Blind, or Hearing to the Deaf, or Feet to the Cripple, or Strength to the Paralytic, much less raise the Dead to Life; which last power with the rest was often, he says, in his Time obtain'd by the Prayers of the Church (r).

But farther I said, that supposing any Persons had once receiv'd upon their Baptism or Profession of Christianity any portion of such extraordinary Gifts, they might afterwards lose them entirely upon their wicked Corruption and Departure from the Truth. For our Saviour himself in his Parable of the *Talents* declares, that from him that hath not i. e. does not improve or use the Talents bestowed upon him as he ought,

(r) *Iren.* L. II. c. 31, 32. L. V. c. 6. Ed. Ben.

Conf. *Dodwell.* Diff. in *Iren.* II. § 41, 42.

Enseb. Hist. Eccl. L. V. c. 7.

CHAP. *shall be taken away even that which he hath* (s).

IV. Which sentence would surely be verified as to those *supernatural Talents*, as strictly as in any other. Accordingly St. Paul has intimated to us, that by Misbehaviour the Christians of his time might suffer in their Gifts of the Spirit; since he warns the *Thessalonians* not to *quench* or extinguish the Spirit (t). By which word *Spirit*, all learned Interpreters very justly understand the *miraculous Gifts of it* (u). And if such an *extinction* of the Spirit could happen in any Case, where could it happen more probably and more justly, than in that of a *mischievous Abuse* and perversion of the Spirit? Neither is the Case of the traiterous *Judas*, which perhaps you may have in your Eye, and which was urg'd with so much exulting Triumph by a late *Christian Deist* (w), of any Significance in the present Debate. For tho' he was indeed *sent forth* by Jesus himself with many great and supernatural Powers like the other Apostles (x), even to *raising the Dead to Life*, yet he was not a false A-

(s) *Matt.* XXV. 29.

(t) *1 Thess.* V. 19.

(u) See particularly Mr. *Thorndike's* Relig. Assemb. Ch. VII.

(w) *Christianity as Old, &c.* p. 220. Ed. 2.

(x) See *Matth.* X. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8.

possible

possible at the time when he exercis'd those CHAP.
Powers with his Brethren; but acted with IV.
the rest in the same high Commission of ~
preaching Repentance and the Kingdom of
Heaven; without once attempting, that we
know of, to propagate any *Error or Fals-*
hood by his Miracles. How then, I would
know, is our Doctrine affected by the Ex-
ample of *Judas*? While he preach'd as a
genuine Apostle of Jesus Christ, he was
mighty in *Signs and Wonders*; and when
he betrayed his Master, what became of
him then? Did he ever work a single Mi-
racle to prove among the Jews, that his late
Master was an Impostor, and his Doctrine
underiv'd from God? If indeed he had done
any such Exploit, which he wanted neither
Will nor Sollicitation to effect at one time,
our Adversaries might have reason to ex-
cuse him; but now since the *Jews* them-
selves pretend to no such *Tradition* from
their Ancestors, who no doubt would have
carefully transmitted so precious an Event,
to what purpose do they tell us of this *Tray-*
tor, when they cannot inform us of a sin-
gle Miracle, that he ever did *after* being
that *Traytor*? It is true, this shews he was
not *impeccable* absolutely, notwithstanding

CHAP. his former Powers; which for my part I

IV. never knew any one deny; but it does *not* shew, what is the thing to be proved, that *Judas* was thus *peccant*, or any other like him, and *still* work'd Miracles as *before* his Defection.

BUT 2d. Allowing, if you please, some extraordinary Powers to be vested in some *false* Prophets and Teachers, yet it could not be said with any propriety, that such Persons *had* them as well as the *true* authoris'd Ministers of the Gospel and Apostles. Because the former being *private* Christians, and much inferior in Station and Quality to *Apostles* and *Evangelists*, could have them in no greater Measure and Degree, than other private Christians. And 'tis certain beyond Dispute, that the Spiritual Gifts conferr'd in those Days on *private* Christians, were no ways comparable for *Number* and *Extent* to those of the Apostles and Evangelists, as the learned *Spanheim* (y) and *Buddeus* (z) have shewn at large. And even St. *Paul* himself in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* Chap. XII. informs us very clearly

(y) *Fred. Spanhem.* *Fred. Fil. Oper.* Tom. II. L. 3. Diff. 1. §. 36, 37.

(z) *Budd.* *Eccl. Apostol.* p. 639. &c.

from

from v. 4th. to v. 12th. and from v. 28th. CHAP.
to v. 31st. That those extraordinary Gifts IV.
were distributed only in small portions to
inferior Believers. One had the Gift of
Prophecy only, another the Gift of *Tongues*,
a third had the *power* of healing Diseases, a
fourth of casting out *Devils* &c. Whereas
the *Apostles* were eminently endued with
all sorts of Gifts in their own persons, and
were continually displaying them in the
richest Abundance. So that if a few of the
private Disciples, who had once some Gift
of the Spirit, had started up suddenly among
them as *false Prophets and Seducers*, they
could not eclipse or resist the superior Lustre
of the Apostolical Powers, nor give any
sufficient Countenance to Error in opposi-
tion to the *Truth* of their Gospel. Because
the incontestible Preeminence of the one
would directly *controul*, and destroy the In-
fluence of the other; and plainly evince to
every common Spectator, whose Doctrine
and Authority *came really from God*, and
ought to be receiv'd with entire Submis-
sion as his Will. In which Circumstances,
Miracles would still be very clear and de-
cisive Evidence of the *Truth* and *sound Do-*
ctrine, namely the *superior* overruling Mi-
racles,

CHAP. racles; and those of Seducers, if any there

IV. be, would no more weaken and obscure it, than the magical Feats of *Elymas* the Sorcerer could in the eye of *Sergius Paulus* either rival or diminish the Glory of St. *Paul's* Wonders. So little Truth and Weight, *Philaethes*, appears in that confident Assertion of yours, "That the *false Prophets* "and *Teachers* had the extraordinary Gifts "and Powers in the Apostolic Age as well "as the *true*.

NEITHER in reality is there much greater Significancy in your next. viz. That "these Gifts were not confin'd or annex'd "to any *Moral* Character, but those who "were endued with them, might make "either a *bad* or a *good* use of them, as "much as of any natural Talents and Faculties. From whence some in fact made "a right use of them for Edification, while "others employ'd them only for the Purposes of Emulation and Strife. And this "you say, is an evident *Proof*, that the Persons vested with them were not hereby "made *incapable* either of *deceiving* others, "or of being *deceiv'd* themselves. *Ibid.* Here I allow your *Fact* to be in *some* measure true, and will not much dispute even your

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your Inference from it, with regard to CHAP.
those Persons, who did thus misemploy their IV.
Gifts and Powers. But all this does not
affect the *Apostolical* Powers, nor the Evi-
dence to us arising from them. You here
with poor Mr. *Woolston* (a) confound the
Case of the *private* Christians with that of
the Apostles and Evangelists; and even with
respect to the former you raise a fallacious
Mist before our Eyes, by the terms *con-*
fin'd, annex'd, and Moral Character. To
begin with the latter. A Reader might
imagine by not being *confin'd* or *annex'd*
to any *Moral Character*, that these Gifts
were conferr'd indifferently on the *worst*
and *best* of Men, on open *Apostates* and *Se-*
ducers in the same measure as on *true* and
faithful Disciples; which I absolutely deny
as above, to be Fact, and call upon you
to prove it either from *Scripture* or *Anti-*
quity: All that is really *true*, amounts to
no more than this; that sometimes the Per-
sons endued with those Spiritual Gifts did
not act so *wisely* and *regularly*, nor employ
their Gifts so *usefully* and *properly*, as they
ought to have done. They were subject
often to disorderly *Passions* and *Affections*,

(a) *Woolston*. 1st. Disc. p. 12, 13.

CHAP. such as Vanity, Envy, Emulation, Ostentation &c. by which they were carried into some

IV. indecencies of Behaviour, and occasion'd by

their Gifts unwarrantable Strife and Diffen-

sions. This was the fault, as St. Paul (b) inti-

mates, of some *Christian* Disciples at *Corinth*;

who, from a weakness incident often to little

undisciplin'd Minds, were either so elated and

assuming on the one hand with Gifts of a

higher Order, or so discontented and repin-

ing on the other with those of a lower,

that from hence they fell into Heats and

Animosities, unbecoming the Simplicity and

Humility of their *Christian* Character, and

extorted from their excellent Preceptor St.

Paul severe Expostulations for their breach

of Charity, and Schismatical Contentions.

Others again out of Vanity perhaps or want

of Judgment, would exercise their Gifts

improperly and unseasonably as to Place and

Persons, speaking with *γλῶσσαι*, or *strange*

Tongues, before an Audience that could not

understand them, and by such misapplica-

tion of their Talents confounding not edify-

ing those about them, as they should do;

which drew from St. Paul those sharp re-

bukes of such Men, in the fourteenth Chap-

(b) 1 Cor. XII, XIII, XIV.

ter of his second Epistle. Now granting CHAP.
that in *these* and other Instances of the like IV.
kind, *ill* uses were made sometimes of the 
spiritual Gifts, does it follow, that there-
fore we can have no unquestionable Evi-
dence from *spiritual* Gifts, of *Truth* and
divine Authority in the Doctrines of *Apostles*
and others? Certainly not. For in this
very Case of the private Christians, tho' ex-
traordinary Gifts were not so *well* employ'd
as they should have been, yet they were not
so *ill* employ'd, as you would insinuate.
Tho' they were not manag'd with all due
temper and *prudence*, yet they were not made
the Instruments of *Deceit* and *Imposture*
in Religious Doctrines. The Person, in
whom they were vested, however faulty
in other respects, did not exercise their pow-
ers in *opposition* to *Apostolical* Instructions,
nor work any Miracles by the Spirit in *testi-*
mony to *Errors* in Faith or Practise; nor
indeed, being private Believers, did they
pretend to act as authoris'd *Teachers* of
Christianity. But with all their failings
they continued still profess'd Disciples of
Jesus Christ, adher'd to his Gospel immo-
veably, and submitted themselves to the
Government and direction of his great A-
postles.

CHAP. postles. So that in *them* as in the *rest* the
 IV. miraculous Gifts were subservient to the
 common Cause; they all united in advancing the Glory of their Master, and manifesting to the World the Power and divine Authority of his Religion; and this without *corrupting* the Principles of their Brethren, tho' with *less* Edification and Benefit to them, than might have flow'd from a *purser* Heart or a *wiser* Head. It is true indeed, as you say, that "the Persons vested with these powers were not hereby made *incapable* " either of being *deceiv'd* themselves, or of " *deceiving* others. For as to the first, no doubt but a Man is very *capable* of being *deceiv'd* and *erring*, tho' he has *some* Gifts of the Spirit, such for instance as speaking a diversity of *Tongues*, or healing a Disease, or casting out Devils; because *these* Gifts have no necessary Connection with, and may be separate from those of *wisdom* and *knowledge*; as we know they often were in fact among the *private* Christians. And 'tis no great wonder, I think, if they were; since extraordinary Gifts of *this* kind in the *private* Christians were neither design'd to *qualify* them for the *Ministry*, nor to give or testify any *infallibility* of Understanding, nor

were

were they employ'd by those Christians to CHAP.
any such purpose, or interpreted by others IV.
in that manner. The proper End and Use 
of these Gifts in such Cases, was only to shew
in general to *unbelievers* the Truth of the
Christian Faith, and the Power of Jesus
Christ, not *their personal* Abilities, or Au-
thority of those who possess'd them; and
even in the Apostles and Evangelists them-
selves, they did not *produce* Infallibility of
Mind or Doctrine as efficient Causes, but
only *prov'd* both the one and the other to be
actually free from Error in all they taught as
divine Truth, by being effected and urg'd
in Testimony to it, unoppos'd and uncon-
troul'd by *superior* Powers. That which
properly *made* the Apostles infallible, was
a Gift distinct from these, and of another
kind; a Gift *internal* upon the Mind, su-
pernaturnally improving and enlarging its
Faculties, and perfectly instructing it in all
the Work of their Ministry. And this
Gift was *necessary* for them, who were sent
abroad as *Embassadors of Christ*, and *Stew-
ards of the Mysteries of God*; but it was not
so for every private Christian, who had no
business with preaching the Gospel, and
might learn it fully from other Persons: for
which

CHAP. which reason it was not in *them* always joyn'd

IV. with other Gifts of the Spirit, these latter
 without it being alone sufficient to answer

the End for which they were given. So likewise I allow, what you farther assert,

"that Men were not by such Powers made

"*incapable* even of *deceiving* others, i. e. ei-
 ther of *attempting* wilfully to deceive their

Brethren, or of doing it ignorantly; be-

cause these Gifts, as you rightly observe,

"did not absolutely destroy Men's natural

"Liberty of Will and free Agency, but

left them in the state of Moral and intelli-

gent Creatures, to follow their own In-

clinations, without imposing any fatal ne-

cessity upon them. But then we must re-

member one thing, which you forget or

omit, that tho' Men were not by these

Gifts made absolutely *incapable of deceiving*,

yet they were not made *capable* by them of

doing so; these Gifts did not *enable* such

Persons to *delude* their Brethren in Religi-

ous affairs; by bearing witness without *di-*

minution or *opposition* to Falshoods and Im-

positions, design'd or undesign'd; they did not

propagate and attest any *Errors* in Doctrine,

tho' they did not incapacitate all Persons

from being *erroneous*. And this is the great

Point

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Point, which you overlook, and till you CHAP.
can disprove it fully by plain Fact to the IV.
contrary, we shall not be much concern'd
with mere Indiscretions or other Misde-
meanors abovemention'd, in those Believers
who possess'd these Gifts of the Spirit; since
the Evidence from them in favour of divine
Truth, and the Apostolical Authority con-
tinue invariably the same, notwithstanding
such personal Defects and miscarriages in
some particular Cases.

BUT whatever may be pleaded to this,
you have still a special Charge in reserve
against the Apostles, which it seems, over-
throws their Authority beyond all possible
Remedy. You alledge, "that the Dif-
"ferences among themselves about the
"most concerning Points of Revelation,
"and Method of propagating the Gospel,
"is an evident Demonstration to the con-
"trary. p. 81. *An evident Demonstration*
of what, if for *some* time they had *differ'd* in
such Points? Of nothing more but this, that
all did not immediately know *every* thing by
instruction from the Spirit, and that du-
ring their want of such Instruction, they
did not and could not *pretend* to it. But
surely these Differences are no evident *De-*
monstration of what you had asserted, that
that

CHAP. that the Apostles did *never* pretend to any

IV. infallibility by the Spirit in *any* thing. For

where is the Consequence, from their not being infallible immediately in *every* thing, to their not being infallible in *any* thing, or again from their not *pretending* to the former, to their *never* pretending to the latter? It is just as if a Sceptical Sophist were to argue, that the *Differences* among Philosophers about some concerning Points of *Physic*s or *Morality*, are an evident *Demonstration* of their not being *certain* of *any* thing by Reason, nor ever *pretending* to it. Which idle Paradox, I suppose, you would think extremely ridiculous, and treat with a proper Contempt and Indignation. And your *Demonstration* in this Case against the Apostles is really little better, *Philetus*, and will do no greater Execution among us Christians, than the other would do among Philosophers. For we do not assert a Metaphysical Infallibility in the Apostles, as it is call'd, that is, an infallibility absolute, uniform, and perpetual as to *all* points at *once*, like that inherent in the Godhead itself; but an *Actual Infallibility* in every Article, which they preach'd from time to time as *Truth* and the *Will* of God.

We

We allow, that every thing to be said or **CHAR**
done in their Ministry was not *immediately* **IV.**
communicated to them, but that several
Points of divine Truth were reveal'd to
them by certain Degrees, and in proportion
to the Exigencies of the Church; and as
they were thus gradually instructed by the
Spirit, so they publish'd their instructions
to the World; proceeding all along by the
measure of Light supernaturally afforded
them, and keeping most religiously within
the Verge of their Commission. It is for
want of this one Observation, that you and
some others are so much mistaken and per-
plex'd upon this Head. Because you find
by the History of the Apostles, that they
were not render'd infallible at once in the
highest and most perfect Degree, but re-
ceiv'd at *one* time the knowledge of some
things, which they either knew nothing of
or imperfectly at *another*, therefore you
rashly conclude, that they were not *infalli-
ble* at all in what they *taught* or *wrote* about
the Christian Religion, nor ever so much
as *pretended* to it. As if *Peter* was not in-
fallible, when he preach'd *remission of Sins*
to the Jews(c) by the name of *Jesus* as their
(c) *Act. IV. 10, 11, 12, 19, 29, 31, 32.*

only

CHAP. only Prince and Saviour, tho' in preaching
 IV. thus he obey'd, as he says, the Command of
 God, and appeals to the *Holy Ghost* given by
 God to his Servants, as attesting the Truth
 of it, and tho' he wrought most amazing
 Miracles in Testimony of his Doctrine; be-
 cause he had not learnt as yet by Revelation,
 which he did soon after, that the Benefits
 and Priviledges of the Gospel were all to
 be extended to the *Gentiles* as well as the
Jews, and both were to be made joynt-
 Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Or,
 that because St. Paul had no Commandment
 of the Lord concerning Virgins, as he owns
 expressly (d) and accordingly gave no Com-
 mandment about them, therefore he had no
 Commandment of the Lord as to any other
 point; tho' he likewise declares upon ano-
 ther occasion, that *what he writes (i. e. as*
Commandments) are the Commandments of
the Lord (e). How weak and frivolous is
 this way of arguing, calculated only to
 prove, what no one denies, that the A-
 postles were by no means infallibly omniscient!
 A priviledge, which indeed they
 were too great Lovers and Patrons of Truth

(d) 1 Cor. VII. 25.

(e) 1 Cor. XIV. 37.

to assume, and without assuming it to them-
selves, had still a *Demonstration of the Spi-*
rit and Power, sufficient to evince and
maintain their Apostolical Authority. And
farther, what utterly ruins your mighty
Demonstration, is, that even your Premises
on which it is built, are wholly precarious
and chimerical. There were no such *differ-*
rences among them, as those you speak of, a-
bout the *most concerning Points of Revelation*;
and I'll venture to pronounce, that you will
never be able to *prove* it from History; what-
ever a fruitful Invention, or a warm Imagi-
nation may suggest. One would think, the
most concerning Points of Revelation should be
the constituent *Doctrines and Precepts* of it,
those Objects of Faith or Rules of Practice,
by which Mankind were now to be govern'd,
in order to obtain the favour of God, and e-
ternal Life and Happiness. But when or where
did the Apostles *differ* absolutely among them-
selves about any of these Points? Shew us,
if you can, *Phileathes*, and then we may
hearken more attentively to your Objections
against their Infallibility. The Truth is,
that the Apostles when they acted as such,
did perfectly agree in *Principle* as to all the
Substantials of Religion, and taught their

CHAP.
IV.

CHAP. Disciples with the most exact Correspondence

IV. dence and Uniformity, whatsoever their Lord

commanded them. They all preach'd the same Duties to God and Man, the same terms and means of Salvation, the same rewards and punishments in a future State. And from thence proceeded that remarkable Harmony and Unity in Doctrine and practise, so often observ'd and celebrated of the Primitive Christian Churches (*f*); which could not arise nor be accounted for from any other Cause, but the common Delivery of the same Faith and Rule of Life, to all the several Churches by the Apostles the Founders of them. So unanswerable is that Question of Tertullian's, *Ecquid verisimile est, ut tot ac tanta in unam fidem erraverint? Nullus apud multos eventus unus est; exitus variasse debuerat Error Doctrina Ecclesiarum.*

BUT after all, I suppose from what you have advanc'd in another place, that these most concerning points of Revelation, which in fact occasion'd such differences among the Apostles, were 1. The Nature and Obligation of the Jewish Law. And 2. The

(*f*) See Iren. adv. Hær. L. III. c. 3, 4.

Tertull. Præscrip. c. 20, 22, 23, 24, 28.

Terms upon which the Jewish and Gentile
Converts to Christianity were to be joyn'd
in one Communion, and incorporated into
one Body the Church of Christ. Here it
is, you see St. Paul and the other Apostles
so much at variance; you make 'em perpetually
disputing and opposing one another
to the last, upon Principles directly contradictory
to, and absolutely irreconcilable with each other.
You say 1st. "That St. Paul's Scheme of Judaism was very different
from the Notions, which the rest of the Apostles,
Elders and Brethren in the famous Council of Jerusalem
had of it. That He was the great Freethinker of his
Age, the brave Defender of Reason against Authority,
in Opposition to those, who had set up a wretched
Scheme of Superstition, Blindness and Slavery, contrary
to all reason and common Sense; and this under the
specious, popular pretence of a divine Institution and
Revelation from God. That He would never admit of
the Obligation of the Law, as the Law of God, or as any
way binding in point of Religion and Conscience. And
herein St. Paul had not one Apostle, Prophet, or Teacher
of that Age, who heartily joyn'd

CHAP. "with Him, except *Timothy*. p. 71, 72.

IV. Truly, *Philaethes*, I should wonder extremely, if *St. Paul* had been joyn'd in these Sentiments by any one *Apostle* or *Prophet* of that Age, because I am sure, and will maintain it against all the *Moral Philosophers* in the World, that these Sentiments had been very erroneous and prophane; as many excellent Writers inferior to none in Wisdom, Learning, and Acumen, and superior beyond Comparison to all the petulant Revilers of the Jewish Law, that have hitherto appear'd, have often and abundantly prov'd to the World. And if God grants me Life and Health, I shall not be discourag'd, *Philaethes*, by your witty and Satyrical Language, from entering the Lists with you hereafter upon that Subject. But this must be wav'd at present, till it regularly falls in my way; in the mean time I would only observe to the Reader, that what you insinuate of *Timothy* and *St. Paul*, is a ridiculous Fiction and Chimæra. They had never such notions of the Law of *Moses*, and would even abhor the very Thoughts of 'em, did they know, they were laid to their Charge. And the latter of these (with whom no doubt, his faithful Disciple and Companion

non agreed) has told us so plainly and so of-
 CHAP. ten, what his real Sentiments were, that it
 IV. really seems to me like mere Grimace to
 dispute them, since to use your phrase, "*Men
 must wilfully shut their Eyes, one would
 think, not to see them.*" However if any
 one, from what you have said, can seriously
 doubt of St. Paul's agreement with the other
 Apostles in this point, let me beg his pati-
 ence till I come to the Jewish Law, when I
 hope to remove all doubts and suspicions of
 that kind. In the mean time let the Rea-
 der reflect on those two passages of St. Paul's
 Epistle to the Romans Ch. III. where the
 following Questions are asked and answer'd,
*What advantage then hath the Jew? Or
 what profit is there of Circumcision? much
 every way: chiefly, because unto them were
 committed the Oracles of God. v. 1, 2. and
 v. 34. Do we then make void the Law thro'
 faith? God forbid; yea, we establish (g) the
 Law.*

(g) That is, we establish the Authority of it as a Law of
 God, in its full extent, shewing the strictness and severity of
 that Covenant upon works, as subjecting by the terms of it
 every Transgressor to the divine Displeasure and unavoidable
 Punishment: we likewise establish it in the true design and scope
 of it, as prefiguring and pointing to a better Covenant, and
 leading us as a School-Master to Christ, who is the end of the

CHAP. *Law*. What! *establiſh the Law* i. e. the
 IV. Law of Moſes, which he knew to be a
 wretched Scheme of Superſtition, Blindneſs,
 and Slavery, contrary to reaſon and common
 Senſe? And that, with a God forbid, that
 he ſhould make it void? Nay and call the
 Jewish Books of Religion the Oracles of
 God! What a fine Scheme of Hypocriſy
 is this for a brave Apoſtle, and the greateſt
 Freethinker of the Age! For him, who was
 the ſtout Defender of Reaſon againſt Autho-
 rity, in oppoſition to thoſe, who had ſet up
 ſuch a wretched ſcheme under the popular
 pretence of a divine Revelation, and was
 now ſpeaking to Diſciples far enough from
 Judea! Surely he that can diſcern a Con-
 temner and Subverter of the Jewish Law in

Law. *Rom. X. 4. Gal. III. 24.* From thence we would con-
 vince you, Jews, how vain are your hopes of being *juſtified*
 abſolutely by that *Law*, and how neceſſary it is for you as
 well as the Gentiles, to embrace the Chriſtian Faith, in order
 to be ſav'd eternally. It is in this Senſe undoubtedly, that
 St. Paul meant to *establiſh* the (Jewish) Law, i. e. by inſiſting
 on the rigorous obligations and conditions of it to all under its
 Power, as the Jews were; not as ſome have expounded him,
 as if he meant here to *establiſh* that *Law* in any part as a *Law*
 to Chriſtians; which conſtruction indeed, if true, would ob-
 lige us to underſtand only the *Moral* Law, with too great a
 Reſtriction of the word in this place. See *Chryſoſtom, Grotius,*
and Whitby in loc.

THE

these sentences, must needs be a Man of most wonderful Penetration and Judgment. CHAP. IV.

THE next grand point of difference between the same Apostle and his Brethren you state thus. viz. "Whether the Jewish Converts were still oblig'd in point of Religion and Conscience, to obey the whole Law. The Apostles, Elders, and Brethren at Jerusalem stood to the Affirmative, while Paul as stily maintained the Negative against them. And tho' St. Paul still insisted on immediate Revelation for this, yet the rest of the Apostles, it seems, never had any such Revelation, nor could St. Paul ever convince them. p. 78, 79. comp. 54, 60. False again and groundless entirely as to all the Apostles, and as false of most of the Christian Elders there of that time; tho' I will not answer for all the Brethren or private Christians of Jewish Extraction; many of whom did at first, I allow, continue very zealous Adherents to the Law even after their Conversion, and that under a notion of its perpetual Obligation; and from them sprung in after-Times the Sects of the Ebionites and Nazareans, as I shall shew at large in a following Chapter.

CHAP. YOUR 3^d concerning Point, as I take it,
 IV. is this, 'Whether the *Gentile* converts
 "were bound as a matter of Religion and
 "conscience, to comply with the Mosaic
 "Law of Profelytism, as a necessary condi-
 "tion upon which the christian Jews were
 "to hold communion with them. That
 "the Jerusalem Council enjoyn'd this Law
 "of Profelytism upon the *Gentile* Converts,
 "as necessary or as a Matter of Religion and
 "conscience. But St. *Paul* could never
 "submit to the Imposition of this Law of
 "Profelytism upon his *Gentile* converts, at
 "least not in the sense of the Council as ne-
 "cessary, as a matter of Religion, or as the
 "Law of God upon the Authority of Mo-
 "ses. *Ibid.* & p. 361, 362, 363. But here
 too, *Philaethes*, you are quite mista-
 ken as to the grounds and Principles,
 upon which the Council proceeded in their
 Decree; and I will engage to prove moreo-
 ver, that St. *Paul* agreed with that Council
 entirely in the Principles, Ends, and Execu-
 tion of their Decree. Neither is there any
 more Truth in what you add, 4th. "That
 "the Jewish Apostles could never come into
 "the Belief in *Jesus* as the common Savi-
 "our of the World, without Distinction
 "between

between Jew and Gentile. Ibid. & p. 354, CHAP.
367, 375, 376, 377. And that this was IV.
St. Paul's Gospel, which no Christian
Jew would ever admit. Mere Romance
indeed, *Philaethes*, and founded on nothing
but a gross confusion of Times and Persons;
to explain which distinctly in this place,
would give me too long an Interruption
in the present Argument; therefore pass-
ing over these and other Points of your's at
present as of little consequence, I take the
freedom to conclude now my first Proposi-
tion laid down above, as settled upon clear
and substantial Principles viz. That Mira-
cles of that kind, number, continuance,
and so circumstantiated, as those of Jesus
and his Apostles are suppos'd to be (especi-
ally considering the Nature of the *Doctrine*
attested by them) were, I may say, to Eye-
witnesses demonstrative Evidence both of
his and their divine Mission, and of course
of the divine Authority of their Doctrine.

THE second Proposition I laid down was
this, that such Miracles of our Lord re-
corded faithfully by his own Apostles and
Eyewitnesses of them, and such of the lat-
ter by their Attendants and Disciples, toge-
ther with particuliar Accounts of our Lord's

Doctrine

CHAP. *Doctrine* by the same Apostles, and that of
 IV. his Apostles by themselves in writing,  would prove no less in all succeeding times to those, who should receive these writings transmitted down to their Hands, with clear and unquestionable Evidence of their being genuine, perfect, and uncorrupted in all material Points. This Proposition, I presume, requires but little Argument to gain it admittance. For 'tis almost self-evident like any general Axiom, that Miracles *faithfully* recorded, and *faithfully* transmitted, have really the same Force and weight with Miracles seen with our Eyes; because they are the *same* in themselves, only known by different *Mediums*: just as *Experiments* in Natural Philosophy *faithfully* represented in writing, would have just the same weight among Philosophers, as if they were made in their presence. And so likewise the *Doctrine* of *Jesus* and his Apostles *faithfully* express'd in writing, is the same to all intents and purposes, as if it was heard immediately from the Mouth of either. Because the Letters or Characters, which express any sett of words, make no *real* difference in the words themselves, as to their Power and Efficacy. And consequently,

quently, if any particular Doctrine was CHAP.
prov'd at first to be of God by certain Mira- IV.
cles attesting it, the same Doctrine tho'
written will also be prov'd *divine* by the
same Miracles in *writing*. The only Ques-
tion that can give any Room for Doubt and
Scruple in the Case is, whether the writings
pretended to contain both Doctrine and Mi-
racles are *faithful*, genuine and uncorrupted,
so that we may safely depend upon them in
every thing material, and are justly oblig'd
to be govern'd by them. In which Questi-
on as we of this time are immediately con-
cern'd, I go on now

3. In the 3^d place to shew, that we of
this Age are exactly in the case abovemention'd;
that is, that we have now before us
the Miracles of Jesus Christ *faithfully* re-
corded by his Apostles the *Eyewitnesses* of
them, and Miracles of the latter by their Dis-
ciples, together with true and particular
accounts of our Lord's *Doctrine* by the
same Apostles his *Disciples* in it, and that of
the Apostles by *themselves*, in writings un-
questionably *antient*, *genuine*, and *pure*.
This indeed is a Task, from which I might
be easily excus'd after so many excellent
Writers, whose reasonings upon this Head
were

were never answer'd by our Sceptical Adversaries, nor ever will be. But since they go on notwithstanding in their old Strain, representing our Evidences perpetually to common Believers as dark, suspicious, and very uncertain, we must also persist in obviating such idle Suggestions, to prevent any ill impressions from the trite Declamations upon *Human Testimony* and fallible *Tradition*. I shall therefore at present lay the whole Matter before you, with as much Perspicuity and Brevity as I can.

It is then to be observ'd in the first place, that the Writings, which now make up our *New Testament*, are no late spurious Productions of *modern Times*, but were extant and in common use among Christians 1600 Years ago and upwards, as well as now. You may trace them, if you please, thro' every Century backwards from the present, in numberless writers, preceding one another in time and of different Countries, as *England, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece, Asia, and Africa*; and what is more remarkeable, you have not only small occasional citations of a few particular passages in the course of so many Centuries, as you have of other antient Writers, but

but the *whole* Text in a manner of the New Testament exhibited to your view in many different Centuries, as might be shewn at large, were it necessary; a Satisfaction, that cannot be had, as to any profane *Greek* or *Latin* Author whatsoever (*b*), and which affords a Degree of Evidence, no less considerable for its weight, than for its eminent peculiarity to the Books of Scripture. And he that has neither leisure, nor opportunity, or inclination for such minute and laborious Enquiries, may soon and easily, if a Scholar, be satisfied of this Truth in a shorter way; he may take a few writers of 4 or 5 intermediate Ages, and see how well the Text of the New Testament agrees in each with the present. Thus for instance, let him first advance 200 Years backwards to the rise of the glorious Reformation, and observe how the sacred writings appear'd among *Papists* and *Protestants* in those Days. From thence let him rise up to the Age of *William* the Conqueror near five Hundred years higher, and in that consult *Theo-*

(*b*) For tho' the Text of a *few* antient Writers has indeed been largely exhibited in subsequent Commentators, yet the Number of these latter preserv'd to our times is very small, and not to be compar'd with the other.

CHAP. *phylact*'s works, who flourish'd about the
 IV. year 1070. In him may be seen all the
 principal parts of every Chapter in the 4
 Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles, including the
 Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and all in the ori-
 ginal Language the Greek. And if he steps
 but into the Age above him, and looks into
Oecumenius (i) Bishop of *Tricca* in Thessaly,
 he may there view the same Epistles of St.
Paul in the same Language, and besides
 them, the Acts of the Apostles and the rest
 of the Epistles. viz. 2 of *Peter*, 3 of St.
John, and those of *James*, and *Jude*. To
 whom if he adds the Comment of *Arethas*
 on the Apocalypse, probably of the same
 Age (k) with *Oecumenius*, with whose works
 it is printed, he may then survey the text
 of that Book with the rest in the greek
 Tongue likewise. This done, let him turn
 his Eyes next to the Beginning of the 5th
 and decline of the 4th Centuries, and then
 he may consult many Writers of the greatest

(i) *Oecumenius* must be plac'd so high at least, since *Montfau-*
con informs us, that in a MS. Comment on St. Paul's Epi-
 stles of the tenth Century, his Name is mention'd among o-
 ther Writers, out of whom that Comment was collected.
 See *Montfaucon. Biblioth. Coislinian. p. 82.*

(k) See *Fabric. Bibl. Græc. Tom. VII. p. 791.*

Name in the Church, *Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, Jerom, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Hilary*, in whom are represented before him in Greek or Latin almost entire the Gospels of *Matthew, Luke, and John*, and all *St. Paul's Epistles*, besides innumerable Citations from the other Books, and Epistles, not commented upon at large. And as to *Jerom*, what you find in him, is particularly valuable, because he was employ'd by *Damasus* then Bishop of *Rome*, to collate many *antient* Greek copies of the Testament, and by them to correct the Latin Translation then in use, wherever they appear'd to disagree materially with the true Original. And this he perform'd, as he tells us himself (1), with great care in the 4 Gospels, about the Year 384. And the same use did he make of the Greek Copies in his Commentaries on *St. Paul's Epistles* to the *Galatians, Ephesians, Titus* and *Phi-*

(1) Novum opus facere me cogis ex Veteri; ut post Exemplaria toto Orbe dispersa, quasi quidam Arbiter sedeam; et quia inter se variant, quæ sint illa quæ cum Græcâ consentiant Veritate decernam. — Hæc præfens præfatiuncula pollicetur quatuor tantum Evangelia, quorum Ordo est iste, *Matthæus, Marcus, Lucas, Joannes*, Codicum Græcorum emendata collatione, sed *Veterum*. Hieron. Epist. ad Damasum.

CHAP. *lemon*; and I make no doubt on the other parts of the Testament; the old Latin Version of which has been prov'd, I think, sufficiently from *Jerom* himself, by *Father Simon (m)*, *Dr. Hody (n)*, and *Fabricius (o)*, to have been afterwards corrected by his Hand as well as the Gospels; and accordingly many very antient Manuscripts of this Latin Version are now in being; from which all parts of the New Testament have been publish'd in *Latin* by the Learned *Benedictines of France (p)*.

Now in all these Writers, there appears upon Examination such an Agreement in the main between their Text of the New Testament and our's at present, that one may

(m) *Simon*. Hist. Des Versions. N. T. C. VII.

(n) *Hod.* Bib. Text. Orig. L. III. c. 2.

(o) *Fabric.* in *Hieron.* De Viris Illust. c. 135.

Conf. *Cassiodor.* Lect. Divin. Cap. VIII. & XII.

(p) *Hieronym.* Oper. Tom. I.

Comp. *Joan. Cler.* Quæst. Hieronym. p. 290—293.

At the End of an Excellent MS above 800 years Old, of a *Latin Bible*, *P. Simon* read these words. *Bibliotheca Hieronymi Presbyteri Bethlehem secundum Græcum ex emendatissimis Libris conlatus.* (l. conlata) Upon which the Critic observes, Ce qui montre non seulement l' exactitude du Copiste, mais l' opinion commune de ces temps-là, qui étoit que Saint Jerome avoit retouché tout le Nouveau Testament sur les Exemplaires Grecs. *Sim.* Hist. Des Vers. N. T. C. IX. p. 106.

justly

justly call them the same, and consider both CHAP.
as extant together within 400 Years of our IV.
Saviour's Birth, and within 300 of the Death
of St. John. And here being thus far ad-
vanc'd, it would be easy enough to carry it
up thro' the fourth, third, and second Centu-
turies, to those very times when the *Originals*
themselves were in Being. I mention'd
before that *Jerom* collated several *antient*
Greek Copies; which if *antient* in his time
A. D. 384, may well be supposed to be 200
years Old, *i. e.* to be written in the decline
of the second Century, not a hundred Years
since the *latest* of the canonical Books were
publish'd, and but a Hundred and Thirty
since the *earliest* (q); and therefore very pro-
bably some of them taken from the very
Originals; since it cannot be suppos'd with
any tolerable reason, that *Original* writings
of that consequence, and so highly esteem'd
by the Christians, should be all lost in so
short a Time; and since one of the Authors
of the second Century *Tertullian* appeals
expressly (r) to the very *Originals* of St.

Paul's

(q) See *Mill. Prolegom.* p. 1. — 23.

(r) *His words are these.* Age jam, qui vobis curiositatem
melius exercere in negotio Salutis vestrae, percurrere *Ecclesias Aposto-*
licas,

CHAP. *Paul's Epistles*, as still preserv'd in those

IV. Churches, to which they were directed by that

has, apud quas ipse adhuc Cathedræ Apostolorum suis locis præfident, apud quas ipse *authenticæ* Literæ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, & repræsentantes faciem uniuscujusque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? Habes Corinthum. Si non longe es à Macedonia, Habes Philippot, habes Thessalonitenses. Si non (I. nunc) potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum. Si autem Italiae adjaces, Romam: unde nobis quoque Autoritas præsto est. Tertull. Præscript. Hæretic. cap. 36.

I am well aware of P. Simon's Exceptions (Hist. Critic. N. T. c. iv. p. 39, 40.) *to my Interpretation of this passage, as to the word Authenticæ, which according to him signifies only the Original Language the Greek, in which they were written, not the Original Manuscripts of the Apostles. But that sense does by no means answer the particular Emphasis and Design of Tertullian in this place. For why should he refer his Adversaries to the Apostolical Churches in particular, only for the Epistles in Greek, when in many other Churches besides them, much nearer to and easier to be consulted by several of those Men, they were receiv'd and read publicly in the Original Greek, as in the Churches of Asia and Greece and even in Alexandria itself, upon the same Continent, where Tertullian wrote these words? So that in this View it was needless to send his Readers to Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, &c. above all others, for that purpose. But in order to consult the Original Manuscripts of the Apostles, this was proper advice, and therefore he undoubtedly meant those Manuscripts, by his Literæ Authenticæ, authentic being here oppos'd to Copy, as the word is us'd by Ulpian in the Digest (Lib. X. T. II. n. 4.) Labeo scribit, venditâ hæreditate tabulas Testamenti descriptas deponi oportere; hæredem enim exemplum debere dare, tabulas verò authenticas ipsum retinere, aut in æde deponere. Where the Tabulæ authenticæ are manifestly the Originals.*

that Apostle. So that from hence it CHAP.
may be reasonably collected, that the Text IV.
of Jerom's Copies, and consequently that
which he express'd in his *Latin Version*,
was the same in *Effect* with the primitive,
as it evidently is with our's at this Day. To
which if were added the many dispers'd
citations out of the New Testament in the
writers of the 3 first Centuries, and part
of the fourth, in *Basil*, the two *Gregories*,
Atbanasius, *Eusebius*, *Cyprian*, *Origen*, *Cle-*
mens of *Alexandria*, *Tertullian*, *Irenæus*, and
Justin Martyr, besides many others, all
agreeing in the same without any considera-
ble variation, tho' they often quoted by Me-
mory only, the most difficult and cautious
Man alive could not doubt, I think, of what
is here asserted.

BUT this light will increase still upon
him, when he finds, as he may do, that all
the known MSS. of the Testament older or
later and whencesoever procur'd, whether

nals. And as to the thing itself, the Existence of those *Originals*,
I cannot imagine, why *Tertullian*, who was once himself an
incredulous Pagan, (if that be any Recommendation) may not
be credited in what he affirms of them, as well as *Valerius*
Probus as to *Virgil's* Hand-writing, and *Gellius* as to that of
Tiro, the known *Libertus* of *Cicero*. See *Gill*, Noct. Att.
L. XIII. c. 29.

CHAP. from Asia or Africa, Greece or Italy, Germany or Sweden, France or England, or any other Quarter of the World, and whatever be the Number of them, 20 or 40, four-score or a hundred, or as many more, do constantly exhibit the same Text in the main, so far as they any of them go; inasmuch
 “ that even in the worst of them, as an excellent Judge assures us, ’tis competently
 “ exact; and not one Article of Faith or Moral precept perverted and lost; let him
 “ chuse as awkwardly as he will, nay the worst
 “ by Design, he shall not extinguish the
 “ Light of any one Chapter, nor so disguise
 “ Christianity, but that every feature of it
 “ will still be the same. At the same time
 “ the very distances of places and numbers
 “ of the Books demonstrating, that there
 “ could be no Collusion, nor altering or interpolating one Copy from another, nor
 “ all by any of them (†). To the same purpose Mr. Le Clerc, a witness by no means exceptionable, I hope, as a Bigot. *Quancunque sit varietas (lectionum ex MSSis) nullum propterea dogma inde novum nascitur, aut antea receptum evertitur. Nulla etiam historia, quæ quidem alicujus sit momenti, ad*

(†) Bentley. Remarks on Freethink. P. I. p. m. 69, 70.

veritatem Religionis quod attinet, antea cre- CHAP.
dita ex Libris Novi Testamenti eliminatur, IV.
aut ex variis Lectionibus antea ignota collig-
gitur (u). How great soever the Variety may
be (i. e. of readings in the Manuscripts) no
one new Doctrine arises from thence, nor is
any one before receiv'd overthrow'n by it.
Neither is any piece of History, of any moment
with respect to the Truth of our Religion,
which before was believ'd, struck out of the
Books of the New Testament, or any one not
known before introduced by these various
Lectians. And now if with the Manu-
scripts he compares in the last place the
many old Versions of the Testament in dif-
ferent Languages, such as the Syriac, Cop-
tic, Gothic, Saxon, Arabic, and Æthiopic,
all publish'd long since by learned Men,
with Latin translations to most of them; and
when he sees them likewise, as they certain-
ly do, expressing the same Text with as
great harmony as could be ever expected,
let him seriously stand out against Convic-
tion if he can, and doubt on, whether we
and the primitive Christians have the same

(u) Joan. Cleric. in Grot. Verit. Relig. Christ. L. III.
§. 15.

Comp. Dr. Middleton. Farther Rem. p. 10, 11.

CHAP. *Bible*, and the same Rule of Faith for our
 IV. Guide. For my part, I can hardly believe,
 that any Man in his Wits, who consider'd
 with a proper Attention the whole Evi-
 dence together, can so much as suspend the
 Assent of his Mind upon it. And I am sure,
 that whoever allows any other antient Book
 to be genuine either *Greek* or *Latin*, and of
 what kind soever, and will not allow the
 New-Testament to be so, acts notoriously
 against Reason and Sense, because it is pal-
 pable, that not a single Author of Antiqui-
 ty in those Languages comes to us with
 near that degree of Evidence, which at-
 tends the other. And if the Sceptical Gen-
 tlemen will not believe these things, let
 them joyn their Efforts to disprove effec-
 tually, what I here affirm. Upon this Point
 I know those mighty *Connoisseurs* love dear-
 ly to harangue the *Illiterate*; they are per-
 petually teasing and alarming *them* with
Corruptions, Forgeries, Frauds, &c. to scare
 them out of all Belief in our sacred Books,
 and establish'd Systems of *Reveal'd Religion*.
 But 'tis easy enough, and surely an employ-
 ment unbecoming any generous Mind, to
 puzzle and perplex the *Vulgar* unnecessari-
 ly, in such matters of Learning and Anti-
 qui-

(w)
1733.

quity, of which they are either totally ignorant, or but little acquainted with. And CHAP. IV. to shew, how the clearest things of this sort may be darkened by a *Freethinker's* Subtlety, we have lately a remarkable Instance in Father *Harduin's* Observations on *Horace* and *Virgil*; in which, by the Strength of great natural Acumen and equal Erudition, he labours to prove both the *Odes* of *Horace* with the *Art of Poetry* and *Virgil's Æneid* to be mere Forgeries of the Thirteenth Century (w). But as such an Attack upon these two *Classical* Authors will appear without doubt no less insignificant than *paradoxical* to all superior Critics, however it may puzzle in many things inferior Proficients, so the like Attacks upon the *sacred* will certainly meet in the end with the same Fate. And 'tis indeed, to speak plainly, very mean and sorry Disingenuity in our *Freethinking* Spirits, to raise such a Dust in the Eyes of the Multitude, and to blind 'em with Clouds and Mists, under a specious Pretence of enlightening their Understandings, and freeing them from *Enthusiasm* and *Imposture*; when they

(w) *Harduin. Oper. Var. p. 280 — 362. Amst. 1733. Fol.*

CHAP. must see and know, if they really are Men
 IV. of Letters, that true Critique and solid
 Learning is point blank against them. If
 our Sceptics are sincere and honest Men,
 zealous Advocates for Truth, and Enemies
 to the Priests for the sake of it, and able
 to convict us of imposing any spurious Le-
 gends upon the People for Apostolical Wri-
 tings, why don't they set about this glo-
 rious Work in good earnest, ransacking all
 Antiquity backwards up to the Days of
 Augustus, and opening to the World the
 late obscure Origin of our present Testa-
 ment, and the dark Arcana of our Plots
 and Intrigues in forming it? Why don't
 they publickly confront us with new Au-
 thors or Manuscripts of value, that may
 fully expose this grand Mystery of Iniquity,
 which they are daily ringing in our Ears?
 This would be a formidable Exploit, and
 would be matter of real Triumph over
 those, whom they modestly stile Pulpiteers,
 Craftsmen, Ephesian Silversmiths &c. But
 instead of that, the poor Men are as harm-
 less Adversaries, as we could wish. They
 have Wit enough perhaps to burlesque the
 Scripture, and lampoon the Clergy with
 some sharpness of Pen and vivacity of Ge-
 nius

ould; but hitherto they have shewn no excessive Depth in Language and Criticism, nor have they made any significant Discoveries of antient Frauds and Forgeries themselves; but all they have done in this way, so far as appears, has been only by hunting up and down in the learned Works of some eminent Christians, such as Mill or Fabricius, Daille or Basnage, Father Simon or Le Clerc, to glean up from them some curious Pieces of Secret History, and then come abroad with most tragical Outcries of various *Lectious*, *Corruptions*, *Interpolations*, *Apocryphal Gospels*, *Epistles* &c. and these seconded with bitter Invectives against *Priests* of all Denominations, *antient* and *modern*, *Heathen* and *Christian*, *Papist* and *Protestant*, *nullo discrimine*, as the saddest *Knaves* and *Impostors* upon Earth. And by these *Declamations* they immediately set the Multitude a gazing, and pass among some for mere *Prodigies* of Parts and Learning, for the brave Defenders of Reason, the noble Supporters of Religious Liberty, against all *Sacerdotal* *Encroachments* and *Superstitions*. *Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?* After all this Noise and Scandal it comes out at last,

CHAP. last, that these various Readings, Corruptions

IV. *tions of Scripture, Apocryphal Gospels &c.* are mere Trifles, of no Significancy and Consequence, that instead of unsettling or weakening the Authority of Scripture, do really confirm and establish it; and what is the pleasantest Jest of all, it appears sufficiently, that the very Materials and Knowledge of this sort among the Fraternity, were borrow'd chiefly from those very Men, whom they are ever abusing with such Freedom and Virulence, even the *Christian Priests* and *Divines*. Had it not been for the indefatigable Labours of Dr. *Mill* and other eminent Believers, the *Tolands*, *Tindals*, &c. had never once heard of the 30000 Various Lections in the Greek Testament; and without the kind Help of *Fabricius*, *Cave*, *Simon*, &c. among the *Moderns*, and of *Jerom*, *Eusebius*, *Austin*, &c. among the *Antients*, not a tittle, I'm afraid, would those Men have known about *Interpolations*, *Apocryphal Gospels* &c. Most terrible Enemies these to the *Priests* and *Christianity*, and most strict observers of *Truth* and *Deorum*, in their loud Complaints of *Ignorance* in the *Clergy*! The Facts, which I mention here, are notorious, and such as no Man who

who is conversant with Books, can with CHAR.
reason deny. And yet are the Christian IV.
Divines, who had so much Honesty and
Learning, as frankly to inform the World
of all these Particulars, to be loaded, it
seems, by little Retailers of *their* Discove-
ries, with Reproach and Infamy, and not
to be trusted or heard in any thing, which
they say or write about Religion! *Utri cre-
ditis Quirites?* Let all, who are able to read
and judge of these Matters, examine as nar-
rowly as they please into the Writings of
both Sides, and I dare appeal to the whole
learned *Laiety* for the truth of what I say.

As to you, *Philaethes*, no one will sup-
pose you affected by these general Remarks,
being, no doubt, a *Philosopher*, *Critic*, and
Antiquarian of a higher form. You speak
with that superlative Boldness and Suffici-
ency, with that *Eclat* of Wit and Litera-
ture, that Disdain of *Vulgarity* in Genius
and Sentiments, that Contempt and Rail-
lery of all *Critics*, *Grammarians*, and *Di-
vines*, and with those severe Menaces and
Defiances of all Opponents, that when you
charge our *Testament* with *Falshoods* or *Cor-
ruptions*, we may then expect without
doubt a fatal decisive Blow, by some dread-
ful

CHAP. full Weapons or other, unknown and un-
 IV. heard of before, against which we can make
 no Guard and Resistance. Besides tho' you
 talk of very gross Corruptions in our Books;
 yet 'tis out of the common way, and wrapt
 up as yet in *Mystery*. You have dropt the
 old Stories and common Topics of Decla-
 mation, and only insinuate with great Re-
 serve and in generals some fraudulent Li-
 berties of past times, without specifying
when or where or how or by whom in par-
 ticular, excepting only that the *Judaizing*
 Christians are, it seems, to answer for it. In
 this ambiguous, *oracular* way you express
 yourself. "I cannot think it of equal Im-
 portance to believe every thing, that
 was afterwards reported concerning this
 great Prophet (*i. e.* Jesus Christ) His Dis-
 ciples and Followers soon fell into very
 odd Notions about him, and reported se-
 veral things of him, that were neither
 consistent with his Character and gene-
 ral Design, nor with the Religion he had
 preached and propagated. They inter-
 polated, added, and alter'd several Pas-
 sages in the original Books — If we con-
 sider by *whom*, and upon what *Principles*
 the Canon of Scripture, as we now have

“it, was at first collected, revised and pub- CHAP.
 “lish’d, it is no wonder, if it leans strong- IV.
 “ly towards *Judaism* — The Books of
 “the *New Testament* therefore ought to be
 “read critically, with an Allowance for
 “Persons, Circumstances, and the situa-
 “tion of things at that time, and not ta-
 “ken in the gross, as if every thing con-
 “tain’d in them had been at first infallibly
 “inspir’d from God, and no *Corruptions*
 “could have ever since happened —

p. 439, 440, 441. Now what Man alive
 could pretend to be sure of your meaning
 from such dark enigmatical Hints as these?
 Indeed it is plain enough, that *your New*
Testament, upon the foot of which you pro-
 fess yourself a *Christian*, is likely to be very
 different from *ours*, after such an *Index*
expurgatorius, so many Amendments and
 Defalcations as you intimate. But who
 would venture to affirm, of what *Quality*
 and Consequence these *Corruptions* of yours
 really are? Or from whence they spring,
 or by what Means or Persons discover’d,
 or whether they truly existed any where
 but in *your* Imagination? For my part, I
 have no Inclination to engage at random
 with mere Shadows, and therefore shall
 leave

CHAP. leave them undisturb'd for the present; only thus much I strongly suspect, that when you come to explain, we shall see the old *Manichees* and *Marcionites* reviv'd upon the Stage, whose very Name will, no doubt, strike a *Panic* into all superstitious *Judaizers*. However, till you draw up the Curtain, all I hope is very safe and sound, and my first Position laid down above may rest tolerably secure. But before I dismiss this Head, I would briefly observe to the Reader, how *improbable* and *incredible* it is both *a priori* and *posteriori*, from the Reason and Nature of the thing, and likewise from clear obvious matter of *Fact*, that such Corruptions, as you insinuate, should ever be fix'd in the Testament. First from the Nature of the thing *a priori*. Because the sacred Writings were immediately, as soon as they were publish'd, read *publickly* every Week in the Christian Churches, and Copies in great Numbers dispersed abroad into the Hands of *private* Christians, as well as others laid up in the several Churches of *distant* Countries, for the publick use of their Religious Assemblies. Now let any Man explain, how in these particular Circumstances, especially when the highest

highest Veneration and the warmest Zeal CHAP. IV.
 for these Writings subsisted among Chri-
 stians, any material Corruptions by the Neg-
 ligence of some or the Fraud of others
 should become universal, and pass without
 any Discovery or Censure. Suppose what
 Divisions and Heresies you please in those
 early times, they all tended to *obstruct* or
defeat any wicked Attempts of this kind;
 the several Parties being Spies of course
 upon one another, and vigilant enough, you
 may be sure, to prevent any such Imposi-
 tions upon *themselves* from every Quarter.
 And as it is certain beyond dispute, that
 the Number of those Disciples, who ad-
 her'd to the genuine and primitive Doctrine
 of Christ and his Apostles, bore no pro-
 portion in a manner to the small one of
 later Sectaries, endeavouring to pervert and
 deprave it, it was absolutely impracticable
 for the latter to succeed in any male-pra-
 ctises on the Books of Scripture. They
 would immediately have been detected and
 exposed by hundreds of older Copies, and
 by the very Originals of the Apostles. Thus
 much we may argue in general from the
 Nature of the Thing, and the Circumstances
 of the Case. But 2d. We may likewise be
 satisfied

CHAP. satisfied of the same Truth, from visible
 IV matter of Fact, obvious to every one. If
 ever there could happen a proper Juncture
 and Opportunity for such Corruptions, it
 must be in the dark and ignorant Times of
Papery; when the Sacred Writings in the
West were almost wholly in the hands of
 the *Priests* and *Monks*, and the *Laiety* kept
 for Ages together in Blindness and Super-
 stition, with the most implicate Faith and
 Devotion to their Pastors imaginable. When
 at the same time, the rankest Bigotry and
 the most furious Zeal for the worst of
 Causes were joyn'd to a most flagrant Dis-
 solution of Manners and Depravity in Prin-
 ciples; and when the Spirit of Forgery was
 at the highest Pitch, and swarms of Le-
 gends and spurious *Decretals* &c. were fly-
 ing about in all Places. And lastly, when
 true *Religion* was in a manner swallow'd
 up by secular *Policy* and worldly Interest,
 and made often a horrid Stale to iniqui-
 tous Factions and Intrigues. Now in this
 State of things one might suspect, if ever,
 that the Scriptures might suffer in their Pu-
 rity to a great degree; that Men who had
 so little Conscience in other things, might
 not scruple to take some Liberties with
 that

that Book, when to all appearance they might have done it with Secrecy and Impunity in this World; and when a few Interpolations in favour of the Romish Errors and Usurpations would have serv'd not only to support them at the present, but to screen them against too busy Enquiries and Freethinking Spirits in succeeding Times. And yet notwithstanding all these favourable Circumstances, not a single Text do we find inserted for the *Pope* and his whole Religion, not a Sentence crept into the Testament during his absolute Sovereignty over the *West*, but what we know and can prove was extant in it, before one Principle peculiar to his Religion was receiv'd in the Church. Now what can be to a common Believer a more convincing Argument, that the Testament has *not* been corrupted wilfully in *Fact*, than this before him? When he must suppose, that if they were so corrupted at all in those times, they would undoubtedly be corrupted in favour of the reigning Errors; of which yet he sees himself not the least Traces or Footsteps; and it was by reading the *present* Scriptures, that our Fathers did so happily

CHAP. pily discern and so effectually expose the
IV. weaknefs of all the *Romish* Pretences.

THE same sort of reasoning may be likewise extended to more distant Times. There were many Controversies arising in the Church Age after Age, which engaged the several Parties in violent Contests against one another. And among these, none was ever debated with greater warmth, than that about *Images* in the eighth Century. The Issue of which and some others in *this* respect has been lately represented, and judiciously applied by an elegant Writer in the following words. "The second Council
" of *Nice*, according to the Request of Pope
" *Adrian's* Legate, order'd the *Writings* to
" be suppress'd and destroy'd (x), that were
" against the venerable *Images*; in which
" Destruction it is probable some *Writings*
" of the Antients were involv'd. And it
" might be suspected, that since the *East-*
" *ern* and *Western* Churches, or at least
" those among them that had the Power

(x) *Destroy'd* is a little too strong, since the Council only orders 'em to be carried to the Palace of the Bishop of *Constantinople*, there to be laid up with other heretical Books. Can. 9. Concil. Harduin. Tom. 4. p. 492, 493.

“ in their Hands, agreed (y) in this Point, and were very desirous to make the Scriptures speak for them (as appears from the miserable Attempts they made this way) they might, as it was their Interest, endeavour to insert some Passages in the sacred Writings to this purpose. But it is evident in fact, that this was *not* done; there being nothing in the Scriptures now any more than there was before, to give countenance to Image-Worship, but a great deal to the contrary. Nor indeed, if the leading Men among the Clergy in the *East* and *West* had agreed in this,

(y) Here again the ingenious Author is not quite exact; for whatever may be said of the *Eastern* Churches (*most* of which indeed did *then* concur with the Council) it is certain the *Western* Churches were not so well agreed in this Point. For Charles the Great, Emperor of Germany, France, &c. in those times, oppos'd the Decrees of that Council very zealously with all his Power and Interest, and even publish'd a large Book against 'em call'd the *Libri Carolini*. And the Synod of *Frankfort* in 794 (seven Years after that of *Nice*) compos'd of above 300 Bishops from *Italy*, *Germany*, *France*, *Britain* &c. expressly censur'd the Decrees of the *Nicene* Prelates, as may be seen prov'd at large against the *Romanists* by *Duillé*. De Imagin. L. 4. capp. 2, 3, 4. and by *Fred. Spanheim*. Histor. Restitut. Imagin. Sect. VII. & IX. and by our *Stillingsfleet*. Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*. Ch. 1. §. 9.

CHAP. " would it have been in their Power to have
 IV. " corrupted all the Copies, great Numbers
 ~~~~~ " of which were spread over the World in  
 " private Hands, and translated into several  
 " Languages. So again in the Controver-  
 " sies between the *Arians* and their Adver-  
 " saries, and afterwards in the *Nestorian*  
 " and *Eutychian* (of the *fourth* and *fifth*  
 " Centuries) the Texts produced on both  
 " Sides from Scripture were the same, that  
 " are still to be found there. And in the  
 " Controversies, that early arose in the  
 " Church, as about the time of keeping  
 " Easter in the *second* Century; that about  
 " re-baptizing of Hereticks agitated in the  
 " *third* &c. both Parties pleaded Apostoli-  
 " cal Tradition; and the Zeal, they ex-  
 " press'd, plainly shews they would have  
 " been glad to have had an express Testi-  
 " mony of Scripture on their Side. But  
 " do we find any Passage inserted in the sa-  
 " cred Writings in favour of either of the  
 " Parties? There is a profound Silence there  
 " on these Heads; an evident Proof that  
 " neither Party endeavour'd to corrupt the  
 " Scriptures in their favour; nor indeed was  
 " it possible for either of them to do so  
 with-

without being immediately detected and **CHAP.**  
exposed (2). **IV.**

We have therefore (as the same Writer observes) the strongest Proofs from plain matter of Fact for the Purity and Incorruption of the sacred Writings, that can be desired. It is to no purpose to raise a Clamour about the *Frauds* and *Artifices* of the *Priests*, and to say they corrupted them, only because they had it in their *Inclination*, or 'twas their *Interest* to do so, when 'tis evident that in *Fact* no Corruptions of the latter Ages are really inserted there, and that the *Priests* did *not* corrupt them in those Instances, in which it was *most* their *Interest*, and, we might suppose likewise, *most* in their *Inclination* to corrupt them: And therefore since they did *not* corrupt them, where they had the strongest *Temptation* to attempt it, we may justly conclude they did not corrupt them at all. Let us now therefore pass on

2d. To a second Observation, which is, that these writings so *antient* and so *uncorrupted* were written by the Persons, whose Names they bear, as *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*,

(2) Leland. Answ. to Christianity &c. Vol. II. p. 171, 172.

CHAP. *John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, Apostles*

IV. or primitive Disciples of Jesus Christ. If you ask, how this can be prov'd, I answer, in the same way, that any other Books *antient* or *modern* can be prov'd to be the writings of their several Authors, at the same or a long distance of time after their Decease. For how do we know, that, *Plato, Tully, Plutarch* among the *antients*, or that *Grotius, Scaliger, Lord Bacon* of the *moderns* ever wrote the Books passing under their Names? I suppose by the *general Testimony* of our Forefathers, who liv'd either *in* or *near* their times. For which reason *Huetius* very justly laid down this Rule as an *Axiom* not to be controverted, *Omnis Liber est genuinus, qui genuinus habitus est ab omnibus proximè et continuatâ serie sequentibus eum ætatibus* (a). Every Book is genuine, that is esteem'd such in the same and all the following Ages. When once a Book is generally receiv'd as written by such a Person, in that Age in which it was first publish'd, or by those who had the best Capacity and Opportunity of enquiring and judging,

(a) *Huet, Demonst. Evangel. Axiom. I. p. 12. Ed. 4to.*  
*Comp. Tillotson. Rule of Faith. Part. II. Sect. 3.*  
 p. m. 674.

who



who was the true Author of it; they that CHAP. succeed in After-Times have no just reason IV. to question its Authority, unless something is alledg'd and evidently prov'd (which seldom, if ever, happens) by which it may appear very plain, that the Book cannot be of such Antiquity, as it pretends, and could not be the writing of that Person, to whom it has been commonly attributed. And by the same common Maxims of Criticism must we judge in this Case. Now the four Gospels, the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, 13 Epistles of St. *Paul*, the first of *Peter*, and the first of St. *John*, have been receiv'd as genuine Writings of these Men, and the 4 Evangelists, by the Christian Churches of all places and all Ages from the Beginning; of which the *English* Reader may be fully satisfied, as to the earliest Times, by the late Collections of Mr. *Lardner* (b); to whom the World is really much oblig'd for his Learned and accurate Performance. And indeed *Irenæus* alone, if we consider his Age, Station, and other circumstances, may be allow'd to be a sufficient witness in the Case.

(b) *Lardner*, Credibility of the Gospel-History. Part. II. 3 Vol.

Conf. Grot. Verit. Relig. Christian. L. III. §. ii.

CHAP. He was Bishop of Lyons in France, so early  
 as in the Reign of *Marcus Antoninus*, and  
 was esteem'd universally for his Learning,  
 Integrity, Piety, and good Sense, as an Or-  
 nament to the *Christian Name*. In his  
 younger Days he had convers'd very much  
 and often with *Polycarp*, plac'd in the See  
 of *Smyrna* by the Apostles themselves, con-  
 temporary and acquainted with St. *John*  
 for many Years, and with others who had  
 seen our Lord, and his miraculous Works.  
 And from his Mouth had *Irenæus* while in  
*Asia*, learnt the History and Doctrine of  
 our Lord and his Apostles at large, as he tells  
 us himself in the following words. "*Poly-*  
*carp* likewise, who was not only a Disci-  
 ple of the Apostles, and had convers'd  
 with many Persons who had seen Christ,  
 but was also by the Apostles made Bishop  
 of the Church of *Smyrna* in *Asia*; whom  
 I have seen myself in my Youth, he I  
 say taught always the same Doctrine,  
 which he learnt from the Apostles them-  
 selves, and which accordingly he deliver'd to  
 the Church (c). To which he adds in a-  
 nother place. "I can tell the Place, in

(c) *Iren. adv. Hæres. L. III. c. 3. §. 4. Ed. Mass.*  
*Conf. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. IV. c. 14.*

" which

“which the Blessed Polycarp sat and discourses, and his going out and his coming in, and the exact manner of his Life, and the form of his Person, and the Discourses he deliver’d to the People; and how he told his Conversation with St. John, and with the others who had seen the Lord, and how he related their sayings, and what were the Accounts which he had heard from them concerning the Lord and his Miracles; and as to Doctrine, how he recited every Article of it as he receiv’d it from the Eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, agreeing exactly with that of the present Scriptures (d). Now tis certain that Polycarp by his eminent Station in the Church, and his particular Acquaintance with St. John and others of that time, could not but be fully and exactly inform’d, as well concerning the Writings of St. John himself, as those of the other Apostles and Disciples. And accordingly in his Greek Epistle to the *Philippians* (tho a short one and in passing) he refers to the *Scriptures* of the New Testament, either expressly or by

(d) Id. Epist. ad Florin. ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. V. c. 20.



CHAP. allusion in near thirty places (e), speaking  
 IV with the highest Reverence of them under  
 the title of *Holy* and the *Oracles of the Lord*,  
 and recommending the Study and obser-  
 vance of them with equal Earnestness and  
 Simplicity. From him therefore (besides  
 others his Contemporaries) *Irenæus* his Dis-  
 ciple in *Christianity* must learn upon the  
 best Authority, what were truly *Apostolical*  
 writings; since those were to be made his  
*Rule* of Christian Faith, and out of them,  
 no doubt, he was instructed in *Christian*  
*Principles*, by that excellent *Martyr* for  
 them. Let us now but consult this emi-  
 nent Bishop upon that Head, and we find  
 in a Work of his (f) written above Fifteen  
 Hundred and Fifty Years ago, as clear and  
 ample a Testimony to the four Gospels,  
 the Acts of the Apostles, the Apocalypse,  
 and most of the Epistles, being such as he  
 had occasion to cite, as any one could wish  
 and expect; and this abundantly more large  
 and extensive, than we have for most of  
 the admir'd Authors of *profane* Antiquity  
 so near their Times.

(e) See Cap. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12.

(f) See his five Books *advers. Hæreses*.

BUT

BUT if there could be any Scruple (for CHAP. IV.  
which there is not the least Ground) as to these or other *Christian* Testimonies, we may appeal to our *Enemies* of Old for this Truth. Neither *Jews* nor *Heathens*, the Men whose Cause and Interest would dispose them most strongly, if there had been any room for it, to deny the genuineness and Authority of these Writings, did ever once except against them upon that Account. *Celsus* that virulent Adversary of the Christians in the *second* Century, cited abundance of passages from our Books, and all along, both when he speaks in the *Person* of a *Jew*, and in the *Person* of a *Gentile*, attributes them to the *Disciples* of *Jesus*, as the Christians themselves did whom he opposes (g).

THUS also did the famous *Porphry* in the *third*, and *Hieracles* in the beginning of the *fourth*, as appears very plainly from *Lactantius*, *Chrysostom*, and *Jerom* who had read their Books against the Christians (h).

(g) See his words in *Origen*. cont. *Cels*. L. I. p. 27, 30, 31, 45, 51. L. II. p. 67, 69, 70, 77, 82, 89, 106. Ed. Spenc.

(h) Of *Porphry*, see *Jerom*. Epist. ad Pammach. de Opt. Gen. Interpret. Adv. Pelag. L. 2. p. 521. In Esai. L. 14. sub fin. Quæst. Hebr. in Gen. sub init. Proœm. in Epist. ad Galat. Epist. ad Augustin. Ed. Bened.

And

And thus did the Emperor *Julian* after them, whose words are extant in *Cyril's* Defense of the Christians against him (i). So that we are sure, the *Heathens* had nothing to object on this Head. And the same is evident of the *Jews*; for not to repeat the concessions before observed of *Celsus* in the Person of a *Jew*, the oldest Book amongst them, that we know of, as written professedly against the Christians, under the Title of *Nizzachon* or *Triumph*, and publish'd by *Wagenfeil* from a MS. of *Strasburg*, quotes the four Evangelists by name in above forty Places, and produces Extracts from them (k), without the least Pretence of their being spurious, or falsely ascrib'd to those Authors; which the Zeal and Malice of the Writer would never have suffer'd him to omit, had he found among his *Jewish* Predecessors the least Ground or

*Chrysostom.* in 1 Cor. cap. 2. hom. 6.

*Conf. Helsten.* Vit. Porphyr. cap. X.

Of *Hierocles*, see *Lactant.* Institut. L. V. c. 2.

(i) See *Cyril.* adv. *Julian.* L. 3. p. 106. L. 7. p. 245. L. 8. p. 161, 162. L. 9. p. 291, 314, 320. L. 10. p. 327, 333, 335, 351. Ed. *Spanhem.*

(k) See the *Nizzachon Vetus.* p. 31, 187, 188, 189, 204, 205, 209, 210, 211, 216, 217, 234, 237, 240, 241. & alibi pass. Apud *Wagenfeil.* Tela Ign. Satanæ.

Colour



Colour for such a Cavil. Neither is there any Intimation of this kind discover'd in their whole *Talmud*, by those who have search'd (l) it diligently from one end to the other, however it be stor'd with Calumnies upon *Jesus* and the Christians in other respects. For which reason we find the two ablest Defenders of *Judaism* against the Christians, of the modern Jews, *R. Isaac Ben Abraham*, and *Orobio*, admitting the Authors of our sacred Writings above-mention'd to be such, as are commonly receiv'd, without any Plea from their Ancestors to the contrary, or any Doubt and Scruple in the Point (m).

Now what better Evidence, could any one desire in the case, than such an unanimous concurrence of *Christians*, *Jews*, and *Pagans*, and those the most antient, and most competent Judges of the Matter (n)?

Strict

(l) See *Wagenfeil. Præf. ad Tel. &c.* p. 54 — 61.

*Ednard. in Avoda Zara.* p. 298 — 320.

*Cl. Wolf. Biblioth. Heb. Tom. II.* p. 985, 986.

(m) See the *Chizzuk Emana* i. e. *The Bulwark of Faith* of *R. Isaac.* pass. ap. *Wagenfeil.* ub. sup.

*Orobio.* ap. *Limborch. Amic. Collat.* p. 144 — 147.

(n) Very pertinent and judicious are the words of the learned *Augustine* upon this Head. De quo Libro certum erit cujus sit, si literæ quas *Apostolorum* dicit & tenet *Ecclēsia*,

CHAP. Strict Demonstration indeed can neither be  
 IV. had nor expected with reason, because the  
 Matter itself is *incapable* of it: but we have  
 clearly as good and indisputable Assurance  
 of it, as we have or can have of any Matter  
 of *that kind*; nay we have probably as  
 much as we should have of it, even sup-  
 posing it *a priori* to be true; and to desire  
*more* than this, would not be *Reason* but  
 mere Humour and perverseness. We are as  
 certain, that those Books were written by  
 the Authors to whom they are ascrib'd, as  
 we are, that any *other* antient Book was  
 written by the Person who is said to be the

ab ipsis Apostolis propagata, & per omnes gentes tantâ emi-  
 nentiâ declarata, utrum Apostolorum sint, incertum est? —  
*Platonis, Aristotelis, Ciceronis, Varronis*, aliorumque ejusmo-  
 di authorum libros unde noverunt Homines, quod ipsorum  
 sint, nisi temporum sibiinemet succedentium contestatione con-  
 tinuâ? Multi multa de literis ecclesiasticis conscripserunt;  
 unde constat quid cujus sit, nisi quia his temporibus, qui-  
 bus ea quisque scripsit, quibus potuit insinuavit atque edidit,  
 & inde in alios atque alios continuâ notitiâ latiusque fir-  
 matâ, ad posteros etiam usque ad nostra tempora pervene-  
 runt? Sed quid pergam in longe præterita? Ecce istas lite-  
 ras quas habemus in manibus, si post aliquantum tempus vitæ  
 hujus nostræ, vel illas quisquam *Fausi* esse, vel has neget  
 esse meas, unde convincitur, nisi quia illi qui nunc istas no-  
 verunt, noticiam suam ad longè etiam post futuros continu-  
 atis posterorum successionebus trajiciunt? *Augustin. cont.*  
*Fausi. Lib. 33. cap. 6. Rd. Bened.*

Author

Author of it; and I will venture to say, we **CHAP.**  
 have many more arguments to persuade us **IV.**  
 of it here, than in the Case of any *prophane*  
*Greek or Latin* writer whatsoever; the very  
*Nature, Occasion, and Tendency* of these sa-  
 cred Writings being such, as would of  
 course raise nicer Scruples, and a stricter  
 Examination into *their* Authority, than  
 would attend the other. For which reason  
 it is wholly unaccountable, how all *parties*  
 of all Times should agree in the Acknow-  
 ledgment of them, upon any other Suppo-  
 sition, but the clearest irrefragable Evi-  
 dence of their being *genuine*. But what  
 now, are all these Testimonies *insufficient*  
 at last, because *Human Testimony* and *Tra-*  
*dition* is *fallible*, because only there still  
 subsists a bare *physical possibility* of its erring?  
 Away then with all ancient *Laws, Statutes,*  
*Records, Historians, Moralists, Naturalists;*  
 for 'tis equally *possible* in Nature, for all  
 these to be *spurious* and *counterfeit* writings;  
 and then by this fine way of reasoning, we  
 cannot depend with any *Certainty* upon one  
 of them. And you must carry it *forward*  
 as well as *backward*, to *future* Ages as well  
 as the *past*, and then behold the excellent  
 Consequences of this strange Doctrine. Had  
 the



CHAP. the Apostles writ *Epistles* or *Gospels* at this

IV. very Time, and their writings been universally allow'd to be genuine in this Generation, yet in the next Century our Successors could have no *sufficient* Assurance of this, notwithstanding the Multitude of *Testimonies* to it, because these Testimonies are not, what 'tis impossible they should be, however credible and numerous otherwise, i. e. *infallible Demonstrations*; and because they might *possibly*, tho' not one *probable* reason appears for suspecting it, either *deceive* or be *deceiv'd*. And for just the same reason, they might question every other Book of this and former Times, going under the Names of *Barrow*, *Newton*, *Boyle*, *Stillingfleet*, *Locke* &c. and profess great Doubts and Uncertainties about the true Authors of them: And even you, *Philaletbes*, tho' at present all give you the Credit of the *Moral Philosopher*, and tho' your Name were Originally prefix'd to it, yet in one Generation more would have your Title to it precarious and doubtful, as evidenc'd only by *Human* and *fallible Testimony*. Neither can we fairly stop here, but we may even dispute the actual Existence of any such Persons as *Jesus*, *Matthew*, *Mark*,  
*Luke*,

CHAP. IV.  
Luke, John, Paul, Herod, Pilate, Augustus, Tiberius, Nero &c. and those of the next Century likewise may doubt whether a Newton or Boyle, Chillingworth or Tillotson, did really live once here in England;

for no better Evidence can we or they have for this, but *Human Testimony*; which if no one can trust securely, because it is not *infallible*, how fading and shortliv'd is the *Glory and Fame* of all eminent *Worthies*! And what then will become of your great *Prophet and Lawgiver, Philaetbes*, and much more his *System of Morality and Religion*! I hope the Reader will look to the *end* of this *Argument* of your's, and observe how fast you undermine the foundations of all *Historical Faith*, as well as *Evangelical*, and of all *Christianity* too, by such an intemperate *Zeal* against the *Jewish*.

You will say perhaps, as you intimate in one place, that your *Christianity* as a perfect Scheme of "*Moral Truth and Righteousness*", is convey'd down to us under its "*own Evidence of immutable Rectitude, Wisdom, and Reason*" (a). Convey'd as what? Not as *Christianity*, or the *Doctrine of Jesus Christ*, no more than a set of *Propositions*.

(a) *Moral Philos.* p. 97.

CHAP. one in Geometry is convey'd to us under

IV. their own Evidence of *immutable Rectitude*, as the particular Propositions of *Euclid* or *Archimedes*. All the Evidence, which the *Rectitude* of the thing in either case affords, is that of the certain *Truth* of it, but nothing at all of the *Author*. This depends on particular *Facts*, and must therefore be prov'd by *History*, if prov'd at all; and so must *Christianity*, as that means the Doctrine of *Christ* and his Apostles; and this again, by proving certain *Books* to be *written* by *Christ's* Apostles. Which therefore is a Point of great Importance, requiring the attentive consideration of every *true Christian*; and which, I hope, is by this time sufficiently clear'd up beyond all reasonable Doubt and Dispute.

BUT here it may be objected, that as to some Writings in our *Testament*, we have not the same universal consent of Antiquity. That for instance, the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the Epistles of *James* and *Jude*, the 2d and 3d of *St. John*, the 2d of *Peter* and the *Apocalypse*, were of doubtful Authority for some time in the Church. All this I allow, and therefore did not rank them in point of Evidence with the rest; but yet not-



notwithstanding those Doubts among some of the Antients, whoever will consider with attention, what Father *Simon* (p), *Du Pin* (q), *Dr. Mill* (r), *Fabricius* (s), *Le Clerc* (t), *Wolffius* (u), and the learned Mr. *Richardson* (w), and Mr. *Twells* (x), and many others have produced in their favour, will see, I believe, abundant reason to admit their Authority. As for me, it is not necessary here, to enter into a nice and critical Discussion of these Points, because neither the *Evidence* nor general *Doctrines* of the Christian Religion depend upon it; since the *History* of Christ and his Apostles, the *Proofs* of their *Divine Authority*, and the *Sum* of the Gospel Oeconomy are contained and manifested to us in those Writings of our Testament, which never were controverted by any one Christian Church (y). So that however useful and valuable

those

(p) *Sim.* Hist. Critic. N. T. Ch. XVI, XVII, XVIII.

(q) *Du Pin* Hist. of Can. N. T. Ch. VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII.

(r) *Mill.* Prolegom. p. 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19.

(s) *Fabric.* Biblioth. Gr. Tom. 3. c. 5.

(t) *Clerc.* Hist. Eccles. An. 61, 67, 69, 92.

(u) *Wolf.* Car. Critic. Tom. 3. & 4.

(w) *Richardson.* Vindication of the Canon of Scripture.

(x) *Twells.* Critical Examination &c. Part. II. and III.

(y) Among these Christian Churches, I do not include

CHAP. those are, about which any Doubts have  
 IV. been started antiently, our *Faith* is secure  
 and perfect without them, and stands un-  
 shaken by any such *incidental* Disputes. I  
 shall therefore content myself at present  
 with only inserting a few *general* Observa-  
 tions of a late Prelate on this Head.

“1. THERE is good Evidence from An-  
 tiquity, that these controverted Books  
 “were receiv’d in the *most early* Times,  
 “by those, who had the best Opportuni-  
 “ties of satisfying themselves of the Au-  
 “thors and Authority thereof *viz.* By those  
 “to whom (any of them) were sent, and  
 “in general by the whole (2) *Greek Church.*

“2. IT is no wonder, that these Books  
 “(being written either to Christians *dis-*

some wild Sects in ancient Times, who did indeed one or  
 other of them reject all the 4 Gospels and all St. Paul’s  
 Epistles, but for no other reason in the World, but because  
 they clash’d with their private and whimsical Notions. For  
 as to any *positive Evidence* against them, they never attempt-  
 ed to produce one tittle, and therefore may justly be con-  
 sider’d as mere *Nothings*. Whoever is dispos’d to inspect  
 all their Pretences of this kind in *one* View, may see them  
 represented at large with Answers to each, in *Sixtus Senensis*  
*Biblioth. Sancta. L. VII.*

(2) This is a little too general with respect to the *Apo-*  
*calypse*, which was certainly not receiv’d by *some* of the  
*Greek Churches.* See *Hieron. Epist. ad Dardan. p. 608.*  
*Tom. 2. Ed. Bened.*

*pers’d*

pers'd — or else to private Persons, living perhaps at a great distance from the Places, from which they were sent) were not so easy to be attested, and upon that account were not at first so generally receiv'd, as the others were, which were either written to particular Churches, to which the Authors Hands, and the Messengers that brought them were well known, or which were first publish'd and receiv'd in the same Places, where they were written.

3. "EVEN those Churches, which did for some time doubt of the Authority of these Books, were perswaded at last to receive them, as the authentic Writings of the Apostles, or other inspir'd Men. If therefore it be suppos'd, that while they doubted of these Books, they had reason for their Doubt, that is, that they did it, because they were not as yet fully satisfied, that they were Apostolical Writings; it may be reasonably presum'd, that they had afterwards greater Reason to lay aside their Doubts, and that when they did receive them, it was because there had been lately such Evidence or Attestation given of their being written



CHAP. " by the Apostles or other inspir'd Men,  
 IV. " as they had not heard of before, and such  
 " as they could not then, with any reason  
 " contradict or gainsay. So that this Ob-  
 " jection is so far from lessening, that it  
 " rather strengthens the Proof we have of  
 " the Authority even of these controverted  
 " Books; and it is besides a very corrobo-  
 " rating Evidence of the Authority of all  
 " the other Books of the *New Testament*.  
 " For the backwardness of some Churches  
 " to receive these *controverted* Books at first,  
 " makes it evident, that the Christians of  
 " the first Ages were not so very easy and  
 " credulous, as some have represented them;  
 " that they did not so very greedily swal-  
 " low any Book for *Divine* Revelation,  
 " without making due Enquiry (a) con-  
 " cerning the Author and Authority there-  
 " of. But on the contrary, their being so  
 " hard to be persuaded to receive these *con-*  
 " *troverted* Books for some time, while  
 " they wanted as they thought sufficient  
 " Attestation, gives us very good ground to

(a) So likewise the learned *Van Dale*, a Man celebrated for his *Freedom of Thought*. "*Anxiè admodùm processisse Patres Primitivæ Ecclesiæ videntur, in consuecundo Cano- ne, hincque tam diu dubitatum de nonnullis Eccl. De-O- rig. & Progress. Idololat. &c. p. 260. 261.*"

" believe

“believe, that they had from the beginning CHAP.  
 “such Evidence, as was without Except- IV.  
 “tion, of the Authority of all those other  
 “Books (that is, of much the greatest part)  
 “of the New Testament, which were ne-  
 “ver controverted, which were from the  
 “first and with universal consent receiv’d  
 “by all Christian Churches: For if there  
 “had not been very undeniable Evidence  
 “of *their* being the genuine Writings of  
 “the Apostles or other *inspir’d* Men, there  
 “would certainly have been the same doubt  
 “and controversy concerning *them*, that  
 “there once was concerning *these* (b). From  
 hence then upon the whole appears evident-  
 ly the Truth of my *second* Observation laid  
 down above, viz. That the several Writings  
 composing our *New Testament*, were writ-  
 ten by those whose Names they bear, the  
*Apostles* or *Primitive Disciples* of *Jesus*  
*Christ*; which is prov’d as to the four Gos-  
 pels, the Acts of the Apostles, 13 Epistles  
 of *St. Paul*, the *first* of *Peter* and the *first*  
 of *St. John*, by all the Evidence, that we  
 of this time could expect or desire, i. e. the

(b) Bp. Blackall. Boyle Lect. Sermon. III. p. m. 77, 78.  
 Comp. Bp. of London. Third Pastoral Lett. p. 260 — 302.  
 Ed. 7th.

CHAP. universal consent of Antiquity without  
 IV. contradiction from our *Adversaries* themselves; and therefore by much greater and clearer, than we have for any one *Greek* or *Roman* Author besides of the like Antiquity. And as to the other Books, it is prov'd by Evidence, tho' not of the same degree, yet all things consider'd very strong and weighty, *sufficient* abundantly to engage our Assent, and to justify the Admission of them into our Canon of Holy Scripture. From all which it follows

3. THAT we of *this* Age have unquestionably the same written Testimony of *Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, Luke* and *Mark*, to the *Miracles* and *Doctrine* of their Master *Jesus Christ*, which those *Primitive Christians* of the *first Ages* enjoy'd, who never, any more than we, saw or heard him in person. For how should it be otherwise, when we have unquestionably all they wrote upon that Subject convey'd to us *genuine*, and *pure* in the main? The intervention of so many Ages between us and them makes really no difference of moment, when we are able to trace these Writings with so much ease and clearness thro' all the Ages intervening. It is not like



like an *Oral Tradition* of *Facts* and *Doctrines* descending from one Generation to another, without any original Records at all, or any subsequent Attestations of Authors thro' each Century. That, no doubt, would be very uncertain, and become more and more so in a great degree, as the number of hands encrease, thro' which it is transmitted. But here the Case is quite different, where the *Facts* and *Doctrines* were committed to writing *at first*, and where the *Copies* of those writings in *this Age* are so readily compar'd with the *Copies* of the same, in the *earliest Ages*. This circumstance takes away at once all ground for Doubts and Suspicions, and may appear to a Scholar, if he carefully examines Antiquity, and even to the unlearned Reader, when these things are duly represented before him, with a Strength and Brightness of Evidence, that is, I think, scarce possible to be evaded or resisted. This I am sure of, and would, if necessary, undertake to prove it, that we have not by many Degrees so clear Evidence, to shew that the whole Text of any one profane writer, *Greek* or *Latin*, is the same now that was read sixteen hundred Years ago, as we have to shew, that the

Text

CHAP. Text of the Sacred writers of the New Testament is the same in Effect with that in Hands of the Primitive Christians, at the same distance of Time. And if so, let those who have so little Faith in *Traditional Conveyances* of Books, endeavour to destroy the Authority of *Cicero, Seneca, Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, Xenophon, Plato, Plutarch, &c.* and see how the Learned World will relish it. I am apt to believe, that such an Attempt upon *them* with no better foundation, would meet with but little Credit and Encouragement, and the Author might perhaps even in this paradoxical Age be despis'd and exploded for his pains. And if the like attempt upon the Gospel is ever receiv'd with more Regard, impartial and knowing Men will impute it to no other Cause, but a secret *Dislike* or *Indifference* to the *Subject* of it, and esteem it as the Effect of monstrous Folly or Prejudice. But to return. As we of this Age have plainly in our Hands the same *Apostolical* Accounts of the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Doctrines of Jesus Christ, together with the same *Acts* of the *Apostles* by their Disciple St. *Luke*, and the same *Epistolary* Instructions by the *Apostles* themselves, which the

the Primitive Christians had in their's; we are so far in the Case of those Primitive Christians, and in *this* respect we have no less reason to *believe* and *obey* our Lord and his Apostles, than if we had liv'd 16 Centuries earlier, or as near our Saviour's time, as we now are to Q. Elizabeth's. Let us see therefore now in the 4th place, how we could prove to ourselves in those Days, the last great Point in Question, viz. That these Histories of our Lord and his Apostles were *faithful*, in the Accounts of *his* and *their* Miracles; and if they could be clearly prov'd to be *faithful* then, the *same* Histories must be allow'd to be *faithful* at *this* Time. Now if any History could appear to be *true*, and any Historian to be an *able* and *honest* one, these must appear so upon many Accounts. And not to enlarge unnecessarily on things, which so many excellent Writers have often and fully explain'd(c), I shall Sum up together in a few short Articles, what I should think

(c) See *Stillingsf.* Orig. Sac. B. II. Ch. 9.

*Grot.* Verit. Rel. Chr. L. 3. §. vi, vii.

*Joan. Cleric.* Hist. Eccles. p. 319 — 324.

*Lett.* Second. post. Causes of Incredulity.

*Dr. Jenkin.* Reasonabl. &c. Vol. I. Ch. xv.

would



CHAP. would stagger the most incredulous Man  
 IV. alive. Now had we liv'd sixteen hundred  
 Years ago, in the Reign suppose of the famous *Antoninus Pius*, about the Year of Christ 140, we should have known such *publick* and *important Facts*, as would alone shew the *Truth* of the History above-mention'd. 1. We might have seen with our own Eyes in almost every Province of the *Roman Empire*, thousands of Men in Years, and of these many even of Station and Eminence, and of great Wisdom and Learning, who before had been *Jews* or *Pagans*, so firmly perswaded of the Truth of these Histories, tho' *publish'd* but in the Century before, as in consequence of it to renounce their former Errors and practices, and receive these Books and to read them publickly in all their Religious Assemblies, as the *word of God*, and the *infallible Rule* of their Faith. For the sake of which we might also have beheld them *rejoycing in tribulation*, ready to Sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes, and many actually persevering in it to the last, under all the Persecutions and Tortures, that could be inflicted upon them 2. We might have known, that thousands of Men, *contemporary* with the Apostles, and living  
 in

in the very places, where the Scene of CHAP. IV.  
 their wonderful Actions is laid, were per-  
 swaded and professed their firm Belief of  
 the same *Facts*, and suffered for it in the  
 same Manner, and with the same undaunt-  
 ed Resolution, and these, Men who upon  
 that Belief were likewise converted from  
*Paganism* or *Judaism*, against the strong-  
 est Biasses and Prejudices of Education, to  
 the Doctrine of the same Apostles. 3. We  
 might have seen Defences of the Christian  
 Faith, compos'd by Philosophers of *Athens*,  
 the one a *Disciple* of the *Apostles* and *Eye-*  
*witness* of their Works, and the other his  
 Contemporary (*d*), which were presented  
 publickly to the Emperor *Adrian* at *Athens*,  
 asserting openly the Truth of these Histo-  
 ries in that famous Seat of Literature, while  
 the Authors of them Learned and eminent  
 as they were, stak'd all that was dear to  
 them in this World, on the Justice and Ve-  
 racity of those Addresses. And this too,  
 while hundreds were living, who, if the

(*d*) Such were those of *Quadratus* and *Aristides*, whose  
 Apologies were read by *Eusebius* and *Jerom.* See *Euseb.*  
*Hist. Eccl.* L. III. c. 37. L. IV. c. 3. *Hieron. De Viris*  
*Illustrib.* c. 19, 20. *Epist.* 84. ad *Magnum.*

CHAP. Histories had been false, could directly  
IV. and easily have confuted them.

But hear the elegant words of Mr. Addison concerning these Men. "Let us now suppose, that a Learned *Heathen* writer, who liv'd within 60 Years of our Saviour's Crucifixion, after having shewn that false Miracles were generally wrought in Obscurity, and before few or no witnesses, speaking of those which were wrought by our Saviour, has the following words. *But his Works were always seen, because they were true; they were seen by those who were healed, and by those who were rais'd from the Dead* (rather, in those *&c.* the Original words being *ἐπεὶ αὐτοὶ παρῶν — οἱ θεομαρτυροῦντες οἱ ἀνθρώποι ἐν νεκρῶν*) *Nay these Persons who were thus healed, and rais'd, were seen not only at the time of their being healed, and rais'd, but long afterwards. Nay they were seen not only while our Saviour was upon Earth, but surviv'd after his Departure out of this World, nay some of them were living in our Days. I dare say you would look upon this as a glorious Attestation to the Cause of Christianity, had it come from the Hand of a famous Athenian Philosopher. These fore-*  
mention'd



" mention'd words however are actually the CHAP.  
 " Words of one, who liv'd about 60 Years. IV.  
 " after our Saviour's Crucifixion, and was a  
 " famous Philosopher at Athens. But it  
 " will be said, he was a Convert to Christi-  
 " anity. Now consider this matter impar-  
 " tially, and see if his Testimony is not  
 " much more valid for *that* reason. Had he  
 " continued a Pagan Philosopher, would  
 " not the World have said, that he was not  
 " sincere in what he writ, or did not believe  
 " it? For if so, would not they have told us,  
 " he would have embrac'd Christianity?  
 " This was indeed the Case of this excellent  
 " Man; he had so thoroughly examin'd the  
 " Truth of our Saviour's History, and the  
 " Excellency of that Religion which he  
 " taught, and was so entirely convinc'd of  
 " both, that he became a Profelyte and died  
 " a Martyr. *Aristides* was an *Atbenian* Phi-  
 " losopher at the same time, famed for his  
 " Learning and Wisdom, but converted to  
 " Christianity. As it cannot be question'd,  
 " that he perus'd and approv'd the *Apology*  
 " of *Quadratus*, in which is the Passage just  
 " now cited, he joyned with him in an A-  
 " pology of his own, to the same Emperor,  
 " on the same Subject. This *Apology* tho'  
 " now

CHAP. "now lost, was extant in the time of *Ad-*

IV. "*Viennensis* A. D. 870, and highly esteem'd

W "by the most Learned *Athenians*, as that

"Author witnesses. — I do allow that ge-

"nerally speaking, a Man is not so accepta-

"ble and unquestion'd an Evidence of *Facts*,

"which make for the Advancement of his

"own Party. But we must consider, that

"in the Case before us, the Persons to whom

"we appeal, were of an *opposite* Party, till

"they were persuaded of the Truth of those

"very Facts which they report. They

"bear Evidence to a History in Defense of

"Christianity, the *Truth* of which History

"was *their Motive* to embrace Christianity.

"They attest Facts, which they had heard

"while they were yet *Heathens*, and had

"they not found reason to believe them, they

"would still have continued *Heathens*, and

"made no mention of them in their writ-

"ings (e).

4. We might have known, that the ve-  
ry *writers* of these Histories, did in Testimo-  
ny to the Truth of them, expose them-  
selves to every thing, that was shocking to  
Human Nature, to Poverty, Hatred, Ig-  
nomy, Tortures, and even Death itself,

(e) *Addison*. Evidences of the Christ. Relig. Sect. iii.

with

with an intrepid Perseverance to the last (f), CHAP. IV.  
and this in Testimony to *Pacti*, which if  
*false*, they could not but have known to be  
so; and to the last hour of their Lives, when  
they could have no hopes of making any  
Advantages by propagating a *Falsbood*.

5. We might observe, that while the  
Fame and Belief of these wonders was  
spreading every Day far and wide, and gam-  
ing Converts without Number continually,  
not a single Writer (g) had appear'd of the  
*Jews* or *Pagans*, to disprove and explode  
any such relations, when these things were  
fresh in the memories of Multitudes, and  
all Encouragement might be expected  
to such a Work, from the Prevalence of  
*Paganism*, and the Zeal of the Civil Powers.  
That nor a tittle had been dropt by *Josephus*,  
tho' writing after all St. *Paul's* Epistles,  
and after those of *James* and *Peter*, and af-

(f) Hence does *their* immediate Disciple *Polyarp*, exhort  
the Christians of his time, to imitate the great St. *Paul*,  
and the other Apostles in *Patience* and *Perseverance* under all  
Sufferings for their Faith. See his Epist. c. 9.

(g) *Celsus* was the first Writer of this kind; who pub-  
lish'd his Book long after the times we are speaking of.  
See *Excerpta Græc. Philippi Sidetæ*. ap. *Dodwell*. in *Iren.*  
p. 488. Conf. p. 32, 33, 500. *ibid*.



CHAP. ter 3 of the 4 Gospels, in Opposition (b) to  
 IV. so many publick accounts of such amazing  
 ~~~~~  
 Miracles

(b) *A Silence alone of Josephus, being itself sufficient for our Cause, as amounting in effect to a positive Confession, considering his Circumstances, I waive urging the famous Passage in his Antiquities concerning Jesus and his Works: Because however antient, well attested, and capable of Defense it may be, the Critics are so much divided about it, that to insist upon it stiffs as a Testimony unquestionable, might be thought no great Argument of Modesty, Wisdom, or Impartiality. On the other Side to give it up entirely as spurious, when supported by such plenty of Evidence, chiefly because it speaks so strongly in our Favour, and more than could be expected from a Jew, seems to me a Degree of Complaisance to our Enemies, and Unkindness to our Friends, by no means necessary by the true Principles of Freethinking, or the Laws of Ingenuity. If indeed there was any thing in it, which such a Jew as Josephus could not say, consistently with his avow'd Principles, I should be ready to renounce so much of it without any more Scruple. But for my part, after the closest Attention to all the Exceptions of Blondell, Tanaquil Faber, Le Clerc, and many others against it, I can see nothing sufficiently prov'd of this kind. As to their difficulties concerning the Style, Coherence of the Passage with the Context, and the Silence of Origen and Photius, they have been all so thoroughly answer'd by Daubuz, Huetius and others, and appear'd of so little weight to Le Moynes, Fabricius, and Reland, that we need not be concern'd about them. The greatest Difficulty lies in the latter Part of it, and a Difficulty it must be, so long as 'tis interpreted in a way, which is certainly wrong in my Opinion. The Words are these. Τὸν θεὸν ὁμοιωσάμενος καὶ ἄλλα μύθῳ διαπορεύμενος καὶ ἄλλοις σημείοις. The Divine Prophets foretelling these and many other wonderful Things concerning HIM. Now here if καὶ ἄλλοις be understood of the Person of Jesus, it could certainly not come from Josephus, continuing a Jew, because*

Miracles in his own Country, when no-
thing could have been more agreeable either

CHAP.

IV.

to

because it would express his Acknowledgment of Jesus for the Messiah of the Prophets, which no Jew, while such, would ever do. But if we understand it, as we easily may, of the true Messiah, not the Person of Jesus, then all is clear, and it only expresses, how Jesus came to be taken for the true Messiah, and to be so much follow'd by many of the Jews, namely, because there appear'd in his Life and Actions so many Circumstances agreeable to the antient Prophecies concerning the Messiah. Which he might own, as many other Jews have done, and yet not receive him as the true Messiah, because he wanted that Character, which in the Notion of most Jews was the most illustrious and the most distinguishing Characteristic of all, that of a temporal Prince and Deliverer. And that word may be naturally interpreted in this manner, appears from his mention of *Xristos* a little before. *Ὁ Χριστός υἱός ἐστι.* This Man was the Christ so much talk'd of; not as some interpret, the true Messiah, but so entitul'd by his Followers; just as Pilate inscrib'd him, the King of the Jews, not meaning that he really was so, but as taking that Title upon Him. To which Name of Christ preceding the *μετὰ ταῦτα* may therefore be refer'd, as if he had said, *μετὰ τὰ Χριστῷ*, concerning the Christ or Messiah there having been such *Σαυπάνων* foretold by the Prophets.

If this Interpretation be admitted, I see no material Objection against allowing the whole Passage to be genuine. All the rest is admitted without any Scruple by Le Moyne, Fabricius, Reland, Tentzelius, and many others of the ablest Critics; and they doubted as to those two Passages above-mention'd, only because they understood them in a Christian Sense: Which being thus remov'd, the Ground of their Doubts as to these is remov'd at the same time. To all which must be added, what pleads very strongly in our Favour, and what the Critics above-cited have observ'd, that 'tis quite incredible

CHAP. to the Unbelieving Jews or Romans, and
IV. when He of all Men might be furnish'd
with

that Josephus should omit all account of Jesus, a Man so remarkable in Judea, and the Cause of so great Commotions among his Countrymen; which yet he must do, if we strike out this Passage entirely. And on the other Side, it is extremely credible, that if he did speak of him at all, he would do it with the less Partiality and Prejudice, both as having the Character of φιλαδελφία, a Lover of Truth, and as writing after the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Polity; which Events might make such an impression upon him, as might draw from him something extraordinary concerning so eminent a Man as Jesus was, who had been crucified by his Countrymen. And if we add in the last Place, that the Passage appears in all the MSS. of Josephus, which are many in number, without one Exception to the contrary, and that many old Writers Greek and Latin have quoted it, as Eusebius, Jerome, Isidore the Pelusiote, Sozomen, Suidas, the old Latin Interpreter of the Sixth Century, and the old Author de Excidio Hierosolymitano of the fourth, besides Hamartolus, Cedrenus, Zonaras, Glycas, and Joannes Sarisberien-sis; and that farther, it appear'd in three old Hebrew Versions of Josephus mention'd by Fabricius, I think, with all this Evidence, we might joyn the great H. Casaubon, Gerard J. Vossius, and Lambecius in ascribing it positively to Josephus, without much fear of the Charge of Credulity, or one Blush for want of Critical Acumen. Now the whole Passage is this. Πιστεύει δὲ ἡ πόλις τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰουδαίων, ὡς φησὶ ἄνθρωπος, οὗτος ἀνδρὶ αὐτὸν λέγειν καὶ. Ἦν δὲ παραδίδωμι ἔργον πιστῶν, διδασκαλῶν ἀποστόλων τῶν ἰδόντων τὸν ἀληθινὸν διχασμὸν καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ ἑλληνισμοῦ ἐπαγαγόντων. Ὁ Χριστὸς οὖτος ἦν. Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐδίδοξεν τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῶν, τῶν καὶ ἐπιστημονικῶν Πιλάτου, οὗτοι ἐπιστάται αἱ γὰρ πρώτοι αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες. Εὐαγγέλιον δὲ αὐτῶν τελέσθαι ἔχει ἡμεῖς πάλιν ζῶντες δὲ δόξαν ἐν ὧν καὶ μὲν πᾶσι καὶ ἀλλὰ μύριον θαυμάσια περ αὐτοῦ

with plenty of Evidence against them, if CHAP. they had not been True. Unaccountable IV. silence of all Sides, upon any other Supposition, but the Notoriety of those Facts!

6. What is more surprising still, we might have seen at that very time, many Instances of the same miraculous Works, perform'd(i) by the Christians then living, in consequence of their Belief in the History and Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, and attesting publicly in the face of their Enemies the Power and Authority of their Master. And even fifty years after this time, did Tertullian, once a Heathen himself a great part of his Life, and a Man of extraordinary Learning and Acumen, appeal boldly for the Truth of his Cause to miraculous Cures of Diseases, then frequently effected by Christians, and for Evidence of the Facts referring

αὐτῶ ἐργασίαι. Εἰς τὴν οὖν ἑξήκωτον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλου
ἐκείνου τὸ φέρον. Joseph. Antiq. L. XVIII. c. III. Ed.
Haverc.

(i) See Justin. Mart. Apolog. II. p. 116.

Dialog. p. 196, 209, 216, 303. Ed. Thirlb.

Iren. L. II. c. 31. L. V. c. 6. Edit. Ben.

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. 3. c. 37.

Dodwell. in Iren. Diss. ii. §. 28, 29, 30, 32.

41, 42.

CHAP. the Roman (*k*) Prefect, to whom he addresses his Discourse, to his own Civil Officers and the History of *Severus* himself, as having experienc'd the Benefit of them in their own Persons.

THESE now are such glaring and palpable *Facts*, that a Man must be either totally ignorant of the History and State of those Times, or obstinate to the last Degree in the World, to dispute them. Laying therefore all these things together, I would desire any mortal, to explain, how it could be *morally* possible, that the written History of our Lord and his Apostles, should as to their Miracles be otherwise than faithful and true. For if we once suppose it was not so, or to be mere Fiction and Fable,

(*k*) Hæc omnia tibi & de Officio suggeri possunt, & ab isdem (s. ejusdem) *Advocatis*, qui & ipsi habent *Beneficia* Christianorum, licet adclament, quæ volunt. — Et quanti *Honesti Viri* (de vulgaribus enim non dicimus) aut à Dæmoniis aut à Valitudinibus remediati sunt. Ipse etiam *Severus*, Pater *Antoninorum*, Christianorum memor fuit. Nam & *Proculum Christianum*, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit, & in Palatio suo habuit usque ad Mortem ejus: quem & *Antoninus* optimè noverat, hæc Christiano educatus. Sed & *Clarissimas* Fœminas, & *Clarissimos* Viros *Severus* sciens hujus Sæcæ esse, non mode non læsit, verum & Testimonio exornavit, & populo furenti in nos palam restitit. *Tertullien.* ad Scapulam. cap. iv.

such

such wretched Absurdities would follow, CHAP.
as no sense and reason can endure. We must IV.
then suppose, that many thousands of Men
of the *same* Age and of the *same* Country
with the Apostles, and *prejudic'd* in the
strongest Degree by Custom, Education,
and Interest against their Doctrine and Au-
thority, could be persuaded into a firm Be-
lief of their *healing Diseases, casting out De-*
vils, raising the Dead to Life, and such o-
ther *sensible* and *publick* Miracles, and die
at last unshaken Martyrs to this persuasion,
when all the while no such things were ever
seen and *perform'd*, and when Thousands
were *able* to disprove and silence any Re-
ports and Pretences of this kind, had they
really been Impostures; and when every
Motive, that could affect the Passions of
Mankind, would incline them to *disbelieve*
and *disregard* the whole. Now what is
this but to suppose in other words, that
such a Number of Men had lost their *Sen-*
ses and *Passions*, believing things as *seen* and
felt by themselves or others, which no one
living had ever *seen* or *felt*, and overcom-
ing all sorts of *Prejudices* in doing it, with-
out the least *Evidence* for it, and persisting
in this Belief under exquisite Pains and

CHAP. Troubles even to Death, without any real

IV. *Grounds and Reason?* Again, We must suppose, that those very Men, who invented the Story, and knew the whole Mystery and Falshood of it, should tell it in the very places, where the Scene of the Action is laid, and where every one would immediately contradict and explode it. And not only this, but that Men of such *Craft* and *Design*, should all unanimously (1) one after another submit themselves to Racks, and Tortures, and every kind of Misery for the sake of it, without any prospect of advantage by it here or hereafter, when by silence and forbearance they might live with ease and security, and dye with a better Conscience and better Hopes. Farther still we must suppose, that both *Jews* and *Pagans*, while profess'd Enemies to Christianity, and zealous to destroy the Belief of the Gospel every other way, would omit that most obvious and effectual Method of

(1) Πάσι δ' αὐτοῖς ὁ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτοῦ ἱερῷ ὁμοθυμαδὸν μαρτυρεῖν: ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀπαγορεύων, ὁ δὲ παρακαλῶν, ὁ δὲ ἐκτενέως μαρτυρῶν, ὁ δὲ ἐκτενέως ἀπολογεῖται. — El di. ποῦτε ἀγαθὸν ἀποφασίζετε τὸ ἀδικοῦν, μὴ πρᾶξιν, μὴ ἴσως ἐκείνη ἡμέρα — πᾶς ἰσχυρὸς ἀποφασίζων ἐν στήθεσσι καὶ ἐκείνῃ τῇ αὐτῇ ἀποφασίζων, καὶ ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἀποφασίζων, καὶ ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἀποφασίζων, καὶ ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἀποφασίζων. — Ensch. Demost. Evangel. L. 3. p. 111, 112.

doing

doing it; by publickly and immediately disproving the *Facts* on which it stood, when they could not want *Evidence* against them if false or doubtful. Or on the other side, should a Sceptic pretend, that such writings might be publish'd in those early times (tho' we hear not a tittle of 'em in History) then I say we must suppose what is equally incredible, that notwithstanding the Gospel-History had been often and fully disprov'd by clear substantial Evidence against it, and all adherents to it were discourag'd and persecuted grievously besides, that yet no more notice should be taken of it in that and in the following Ages, than if there had been nothing said of this kind; that publick *Apologies* for the Christian Faith should after this be presented to every Emperor for a hundred Years (*m*) together, with all the Confidence imaginable, even by converted *Heathens* of great Learning and Character, without so much as a hint of any

(*m*) Such were those beforemention'd of *Quadratus* and *Aristides* address'd to the Emperor *Hadrian*, such was that of *Justin Martyr* (once a *Heathen* Philosopher) to *Antoninus Pius*, such those of *Athenagoras*, *Melito* and *Apollinaris* (the former once a *Heathen* Philosopher likewise) to *Marcus Antoninus*, such that of *Apollonius* a Roman Senator to *Commodus*, and that of *Tertullian* to *Severus*.

Question

CHAP. Question being rais'd about the History of
 IV. the Gospel, tho' professing an answer to all
 objections against them. And not only
 this, but that instead of *losing* its *Credit* by
 such confutations, the Gospel should be
gaining more and more perpetually both a-
 mong *Jews* and *Pagans*, and those, Men
 of Wisdom, Distinction, and Power; since
 no one can deny, that it spread every Year
 continually farther and farther, thro' all
 Ranks and Degrees of Men, and from Nation
 to Nation, till at last it overrun the whole
Roman Empire. Now what sort of Men
 must we suppose these *Jews* and *Pagans* to
 be in such a Case, who with natural *Preju-
 judices*, visible *Interests*, and plain positive
Evidence against the Gospel, do yet every
 year in *greater Numbers* successively em-
 brace the Faith, and endure the worst of
 Miseries for the sake of it? Besides all this
 we must lastly suppose, that tho' neither
Christ nor his *Apostles* were enabled to work
 the great wonders *ascrib'd* to them, yet that
 their *Disciples* who believ'd in *them* and the
Gospel, were endued with those Powers;
 and even by *God* himself, since *evil* Beings
 could never be the Authors of them to their
 own Prejudice, and the utter Destruction of
 all

all their Interest in the World. Now if these things be *credible* and *reasonable*, I know nothing for my part, that can be call'd extravagant and Romantic. It is such a contradiction to all the Practice and Experience of Mankind, so full of Paradox and Absurdity, that *Arnobius* had good reason to triumph, as he does, over some of his time, for such wild and chimerical Suppositions. "Sed non creditis gesta hæc &c. (m).

To all which if we add, that *Gelsus* in his Book against the *Christians* did never once either intimate, that any before him had disprov'd the miraculous *Facts* related in the *New Testament*, nor attempted himself to disprove the Truth of them, nor did *Porphyry* or even *Julian* (n) after him, nor the *Jews* themselves in the earliest Times; but had all recourse to that ridiculous pretence of their being effected by *Magick* (o),

or

(m) *Arnob.* adv. Gentes. L. 1. p. 32, 33.

(n) See *Julian's* words in *Cyril.* L. VI. p. 191, 212. Ed. Spanh.

(o) See *Celf.* ap. *Origen.* L. 1. p. 22, 30.

Euseb. Demonst. Ev. L. 3. c. 6.

Lactant. Institut. L. IV. c. 15. L. V. c. 3.

Arnob. adv. Gent. L. 1. p. 25.

Some Pagans in Augustin's Time pretended even to have found out certain Books, written by *Jesus himself*, in which
were

CHAP. or by the sacred ineffable Name of God,
 IV. stolen privately out of the Temple (p); that
 also, what is very remarkable, the very
 Books, which had been written against the
 Christians, were at last so little esteem'd by
 the *Heathens* themselves, as to be wholly
 neglected by them, and scarce any where
 preserv'd but among the *Christians*, as *Eze-
 kiel Spanheim* has shewn (q), and *Chrysostom*
 assures us expressly in a Discourse directed
 to the *Pagans* (r); and if we likewise consi-
 der

we discover'd those Arts, by which he wrought his Miracles.
 So that Writer tells us De Consens. Evangel. L. 1. c. 9, 10.
 Ita vero isti desipiunt, ut in illis Libris, quos eum scripsisse
 existimant, dicant contineri eas Artes, quibus eum putant
 illa fecisse Miracula, quorum fama ubique percrebuit. But
 the Misfortune was, that the Pagans had these Books directed
 by Jesus in his Life-time to Paul as well as Peter, which dis-
 cover'd the Forgery at once. Sic errant quidam eorum, qui
 talia Christum scripsisse vel credunt vel credi volunt, ut
 eosdem Libros ad Petrum & Paulum dicant, tanquam Epi-
 stolari Titulo prae notatos. Upon which the acute Father ridi-
 cules them sufficiently for their Blunder about St. Paul, and
 asks them moreover this puzzling Question, Why they did not
 themselves work Miracles, like those of Jesus, since they had
 found out his grand Secret for working them? Qui tales
 Christi Libros legisse se affirmant, cur ipsi nulla talia
 faciant, qualia illum de Libris talibus fecisse mirantur?

(p) See Huet. Dem. Evangel. Prop. IX. cap. 39. §. v.

(q) Spanh. Praef. ad Oper. Julian. p. 48. seq.

(r) Οἱ φιλόσοφοι καὶ δόκτορες ——— πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ἀνὴρα
 μαχρὰ κατηγόλαται γράμματα, & πάλαι ἀνέγνωτο ἀπλῶς αὐτὸν δι-
 φέρει

der the great *Improbability*, that Men of such low Birth, Education, and Circumstances as the Apostles were, should form a design of imposing a fabulous History upon the World, or if they did, should conceive the least hopes of *deceiving* their own Countrymen in matters of yesterday, and by a Story not only then concerted, but even publish'd abroad, when hundreds could directly contradict and suppress it at once; and again, the still greater *Improbability*, that so many vulgar Men, should at different times and in different places agree in telling the same story with such coherence and consistency, and not one by promises or threatnings, by Scourges, Imprisonment, Fire or Sword, be moved to desert his Brethren, and betray the Imposture; and all without any *Temptation* to persist in it, and constant *Discouragements* from it (s). And in the last place

ὁμοῖον ἴδεναι. Ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἴδιαν ἐν δόξῃ ποιεῖται ὁ σαρὶς τοῦ, ὅτι
ἐσθλόν, ὅτι ἀδύνατον, ὅτι γυναικί, ἀλλ' ἴδι' ἡλικίᾳ μισθὸν μισθὸν
παισὶν ἰσχυροῦ. ἀλλὰ ποιεῖται ἐν τῇ τῇ ΑΥΤΩΝ ΓΕΓΡΑΜΜΕ-
ΝΟΝ ΓΕΛΩΣ, ὅτι ἀφαινεῖται ἐν τῇ βιβλίᾳ πάλαι. Ἐν αὐτῇ
τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἐν ἀποκάλυψιν παλαιά. Εἰ δὲ τοῦ π ἐν ἰσχυροῦ δια-
σώδῃ, ΠΑΡΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΙΣ τοῦτο εὐαγγελισμὸν εὐαγγελισμὸν αὐτοῦ. Chry-
sost. Tom. V. p. 444. Ed. Sav. Tom. II. p. 539. Ed. Ben.

(s) See this Argument represented in its full Strength and Beauty by *Eusebius*. Demonst. Evang. L. 3. p. 112. seq. Chrysost. Tom. V. p. 445, 446. Ed. Sav.

CHAP. if we consider, besides all other Arguments in their favour, that what to us is the principal and in many Cases the *only* Argument of the *Faithfulness* of other *ancient* Historians, belongs to *these* in the highest degree, namely, that of *Probity* and *Piety* in their general Character and Conduct, and a *visible Impartiality*, Simplicity, and Integrity in their writings; the former of which appears by the Testimony of all that knew them, by those who follow'd their great *Examples*, and their excellent Instructions in all *Virtue* and *Holiness*; and the latter, by their free Declarations to the world of their own mean Condition, Employments, and Capacities originally, of their own misapprehensions of things at first, and of their own Faults and Failings in many respects, which would not have been known to us but from *themselves*; and all this without the least appearance of Art, Ostentation, Ambition, Dissimulation, and Disguise (1); if, I say, we consider without prejudice,

(1) See this represented at large, by

Euseb. Dem. Evang. p. 118 — 124

Dr. Jenkin Reasonableness &c. Vol. 1. ch. 13. p. m. 282 — 289.

Le Clerc. Five Lett. p. 224 — 232.

dispar-

dispassionately, and seriously, how *inconsistent* such a Life, Character, and way of writing in these Men is with *Fraud* and *Lying* and wilful *Impostures*, to deceive and abuse Mankind, we cannot (putting all these things together) *reasonably* entertain the least doubt of their *Fidelity* and *Exactness*. It is such an accumulation of Evidence, as attests no other History whatsoever of past *Facts*; and he that will not be convinc'd by it, would not be convinc'd by any Historical Evidence, and must e'en be left to himself, as a *Sceptic* incurable. But others, we may hope, will *think freely* to better purpose, and give to this History all the Weight and Credit it deserves; and if upon the whole we should see no tolerable ground for doubt and distrust, and should believe the Truth of it with the firmest assurance of Mind, I would ask then,

Vtby. WHAT should hinder our believing at this time in *Christ* and his *Apostles* with a Faith *divine*, and obeying their Doctrine as of *divine* Authority, as well as those who liv'd sixteen Hundred years before us? It has been prov'd already, that we have now before us the *same* History of our Lord in the Gospels, and of the Apostles in their

Acts

CHAP. *Acts* by *St. Luke*, that was extant among
 IV those Primitive Christians, and the same
 written instructions of *St. Paul*, *St. John*,
St. Peter, &c. for our Guide and Rule of
 Faith, which they had in their time. It
 has also been prov'd, that both *we* and *they*
 are assur'd beyond all reasonable doubt of the
 astonishing *Miracles*, and *supernatural Gifts*
 of the Apostles and their Master *Jesus Christ*,
 which if true, were certainly, as I have
 likewise demonstrated, *Testimonies* of *God*
 himself to the Truth of their *divine* Mission
 and Doctrine, shewing indisputably, that
 they acted as the Ministers of *God* by his
 special Direction, Assistance, and Authority,
 and that what they preach'd to the
 World in his Name, was *infallible Truth*, and
 to be receiv'd as the *Word of God* himself;
 and I farther suppose it to be out of all Question,
 that what the Apostles wrote for the
 same Ends and Purposes viz. the Instruction
 of Mankind in the Will of *God*, they
 wrote with the same Authority and infallible
 Truth, with which they preach'd *viva*
voce; it being absurd to imagine any difference
 in these respects between a written
 Doctrine, Precept, or Relation of an *Apostle*,
 and the same deliver'd immediately from his
 Mouth.

From all which Premises, the Conclusion CHAP. IV
is surely very natural, that as we are thus
assur'd of God's Authority and Will in these
sacred Writings of the Apostles, we may
safely and justly build a Faith divine upon
them, as having clearly and certainly a
divine Testimony, on which it may be found-
ed.

BUT here, *Philaletbes*, I expect you will
return with the old Objection, that our Faith
in these writings could not be *divine*, because
in some measure it must necessarily proceed
and depend upon *fallible Human Testimony*,
as that is the only direct proof to us, that
Apostles ever penn'd those writings, and
consequently so far our Faith in them must
be *Human*. Very true, it is freely granted
to be so far *Human*, and you are welcome
to make the most that you can of this small
Concession; for it does not follow from
thence, that our Faith must be *merely* and
entirely *Human*, founded on *nothing* else but
Human Authority, since it terminates plain-
ly at last on that which is *divine*, appear-
ing incontestibly to be such upon *unquestio-
nable Evidence*, and takes from thence very
properly the Name of *divine Faith*. If
you tell me again, that we cannot be *infalli-
bly*

CHAP. *ably* assur'd of this *divine* Authority in such
 IV. writings. I answer, as I did in another place,
 that such *Infallibility* in us is not implied in
 the Notion of *divine* Faith, nor is it any
 way necessary to the thing. It refers indeed
 to a *divine* Authority, and is built upon it
 in the last Refult, and considers *that* as ab-
 solutely and perfectly *infallible* in *itself*; but
 it does not immediately *suppose* or *require*
 our *Proof* of such Authority to be absolute-
 ly *infallible*, or such as cannot *possibly* deceive
 us; because we can act securely and firmly
 enough without this *infallible* Proof; it be-
 ing abundantly sufficient, if our *Evidence*
 of it be really *unquestionable*, and certainly
unerring in Fact, or producing a *rational Assu-*
rance in the Mind, which admits of no doubt
 or suspence about it. We have then all the
Assurance in the Case, that we could have
 even supposing *a priori* the Truth of an o-
 riginal *Revelation* from God, and a *divine*
 Authority at *first* in these writings; and we
 have also as great an *Assurance*, as we can
 have of any past Matter of *Fact* whatsoever,
 even as great as we of this time can have
 for the very Being *antiently* of such Cities
 as *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*,
Corinth &c. and even for the very *Existence*
 of

of such Persons once living upon Earth, as CHAP.
Jesus, Matthew, John, Paul, Peter &c. IV.

And if the bare objection of *Human Testimony* will set aside our Belief in the *divine Authority* of these writings; it will also set aside our Belief in the very *Existence* of such Persons as *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; which, I suppose, is something more, than either *ours* or *your Profession* of Christianity will allow. So that our Evidence from *Human Testimony* amounts upon the whole to a *Moral Infallibility* tho' not a *Physical*, as implying a *Moral Impossibility* of our being deceiv'd by it; which may therefore, as it does in other Cases, command as full an *Assent* in our Minds, as the strictest *Demonstration* in the World.

However, tho' what has been said may suffice to establish and secure our Faith, I shall carry this Matter still higher, and conclude my present Subject with shewing, that our Evidence in *this* Case is not only very good and *unquestionable* in itself; but considering the *nature* of the Thing attested by it, and the *Providence* and *Goodness* of Almighty God, is such also, as may justly be esteem'd and depended upon as absolutely *infallible*. For here is propos'd to our Be-
lief

CHAP. *lief and Practise a System of Doctrines and*

IV. *Precepts, as coming from God in a supernatural Way by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, confirm'd by Miracles certainly Divine, if true in Fact, and directed plainly to all Mankind indifferently of all Times and Places, and in which the eternal Salvation of Men is expressly declar'd to be concern'd; so that in Reverence and Duty to God, we must be oblig'd to attend very seriously to these Instructions, when laid before us; and if upon a careful Examination the Account should appear extremely credible, and to which no substantial Objection or reasonable Evasion could be alledg'd, we could not safely and prudently avoid believing and observing it as the Will of God; it being our Duty undoubtedly to believe and observe, whatever does credibly and unquestionably appear to be his Will. Now in the Case before us, the Evidence of the Truth and divine Authority of the Christian Religion is such at this time, that if we act conscientiously and rationally, we cannot, when thoroughly acquainted with it, avoid Conviction from it, and Assent to it; it is such and as great, as Men could reasonably expect at this distance, supposing*

even

even *a priori* the Truth of a former Divine Revelation, and such, as we are not able to *disprove*, if suppos'd to be *false*; and we cannot *disbelieve* and *reject* it upon any other Principles, but such as would equally hold against *all* and every *Traditional* Revelation whether *true* or *false*, and such as would flatly contradict that Rule and Method of acting upon *Human Testimony*, which Men themselves judge *proper* and *reasonable* in other Cases without number. In these extraordinary Circumstances therefore, I say, the *Goodness* of God will be engag'd to render this Evidence to us *infallible*; we may be sure he will not suffer us in a matter of such importance, where our eternal *Salvation* appears to be concerned, and where the *Traditional Revelation* comes with all the *Credibility* and *Characters* of a *true* one, and as such *requires* us to *believe* and *obey* it, to be deceiv'd by it absolutely, without any *possibility* of *discovering* the *Imposture*. He will certainly secure us as effectually, from being thus *inevitably* deluded by such *Human Testimony*, as he would our very *Senses* from being deluded by such *Miracles*, as those of Christ and his Apostles are represented. The Evidence from *Sense* itself

CHAP. could become *infallible* only from the Good-
 IV! ness of God, and on the same great Attri-
 bute of his may we rest our Evidence from
 Testimony. Because in each Case we must
 in Duty be govern'd by that *highest Evi-*
dence, which our several Situations and Cir-
 cumstances admit of; and as *Human Testi-*
mony is the *highest* we are capable of, and
 what we must follow when credible in so
 great a Degree, that will prove under God
 as *sure* a Guide to us in this important
 Affair, as *Eyes and Ears* to those, who *saw*
 and *heard* our Saviour and his Apostles.
 So that however *fallible* Human Testimo-
 ny may be in other Cases, it will certain-
 ly in *this*, by the *Providence* of God, tho'
 not from its *own Nature*, become *infallible*
 to us in *Fact*, and may be taken likewise
 as the Ground of a truly *infallible* as well as
divine Faith.

I SHALL only add farther, what deserves
 our particular attention, that of one sort of
 Miracles belonging to *Jesus Christ* we of
 this time have even *sensible* Evidence, I
 mean of his *divine Foreknowledge*. He fore-
 told the Destruction of *Jerusalem* in these
 memorable words, address'd to the City with
 weeping over it; *If thou hadst known even*
 thou

thou, at least in this thy Day, the things CHAP. IV.
which belong to thy Peace. But now they
are hid from thine Eyes. For the Days shall
come upon thee, that thine Enemies shall
cast a Trench about thee, and compass thee
round, and keep thee in on every side. And
shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy
Children within thee; and they shall not leave
in thee one Stone upon another: because thou
knewest not the time of thy Visitation. Luke
Ch. XIX. v. 42, 43, 44. Comp. Matt.
XXIV. 2. This Prophecy was utter'd above
30 Years before this Tragical Desolation
happen'd, when as yet there was no visible
approach or Appearance of it; and the very
Books, in which it is related, were written
and publish'd several Years, before the
Siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. But so
punctually was it fulfill'd in the Event, that
as Josephus the Jew, who liv'd an Eyewit-
ness to the dismal Scene, informs us, the
whole City and Temple with all its magnifi-
cent Structures were raz'd to the Ground,
excepting a few Towers in the Fortificati-
ons, left as Monuments of its former Strength,
and of the Roman Power; at the same time
that all within was so utterly defac'd and
destroy'd, that not one Stone was left upon
another.

CHAP. another, nor any traces remaining of any
 IV. former City existing in the Place (u). And
 such a Vengeance continued to hang over it
 ever after, that when the Emperor Julian
 in favour to the Jews, and with a view to
 defeat this Prophecy of our Saviour's, at-
 tempted to rebuild their Temple, such e-
 ruptions of Fire burst out about the new
 Foundations of it, as utterly destroy'd both
 the Works and many of the Workmen em-
 ploy'd in them, and blasted the whole De-
 sign: all which, beside Christian Histori-
 ans (x), is related by another very eminent
 one, *Ammianus Marcellinus* a Heathen, and
 who serv'd in the Army under Julian at
 that time (y). From whence Julian him-
 self

(u) Κελού Καίτοις ἡν ΤΗΝ ΤΕ ΠΟΛΙΝ ΑΠΑΞΑΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΝ
 ΝΕΩΝ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΑΥΤΕΙΝ, πύργους μὲν ὅτι τῶ ἄλλων ὑπερ-
 ῥέκτιστο κατελείποντες — τῶχος δ' ὅταν ἡ ἐξ ἰσχυρίας τὴν πόλιν
 περιέχον. — Τὸν δ' ἄλλον ἀπαύστη τῶ πάλιν περιέχον. ΟΥΤΩΣ
 ΕΞΩΜΑΛΙΣΑΝ, ΩΣΤΕ ΜΗΔΕ ΠΟΠΟΤ' ΟΙΚΗΘΗΝΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ
 ΑΝ ΕΤΙ ΠΑΡΑΣΧΕΙΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΡΟΣΕΛΑΘΟΥΣΙ. *Joseph. Bell.*
Jud. L. VII. c. 1. Ed. Haverc.

(x) See *Socrat. Hist. Eccl. L. III. c. 20.*
Sozomen. L. V. c. 22.

Theodoret. L. III. c. 20.

(y) *Ampliosum* quondam apud Hierosolimam Tem-
 plum — instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis: ne-
 gotiumque maturandum *Alypio* dederat Antiochenfi — Cum
 itaque rei fortiter instaret *Alypius*, juvaretque provincie
 Rector

self in a Fragment of a large Oration or E-
pistle (2) of his, ask'd the Jews with some
degree of insult, "What they would say of
"their Temple, which had been thrice over-
"thrown, and was not erected to that Day,
"tho' he had himself design'd to rebuild it?
Alluding plainly by his thrice overthrown
to the late Ruin of its Foundations laid by
himself, since their Temple had been de-
stroy'd only twice before this, once by the
Babylonians, and the second time by the Ro-
mans under Titus. And we all know, that
to this Day, the Jews have no Temple in
Palestine the happy Land of their Ancestors,
but continue dispers'd over the Earth, and
a distinct People from all other Nations of

Rector, metuendi Globi flammæ prope fundamenta cre-
bris assultibus erumpentes, secere locum exultis aliquoties
operantibus inaccessum; hocque modo elemento destinatis
repellente, cessavit inceptum. Ammian. Marcellin. L. XXIII.
c. I. Ed. Gronov.

Upon this Subject I cannot help observing the strange Neg-
ligence or something worse in Mr. Basnage, who examining
professedly into the Credit of this Fact, takes not the least No-
tice of Marcellinus, tho' cited often before his time, when his
Authority is so decisive in the Case. See Basnage. Hist. of
Jews. L. VI. c. XIV. §. 18, 19.

(2) Τι παρ τοῦ Νεοφίτου τοῦ παρ ἀντὶ τῆς ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ἀνα-
γραφῆς, ἡτοιμασμένον ἔστιν οὗτο: Εἰς τὸν αἶνα αἰνῶν αἰνῶν
— ΑΝΑΕΤΗΛΕΣΤΑΙ ἀναίθετος αἶμας ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τῇ
ἀληθείᾳ ἐν αὐτῇ ψυχῇ. Julian. Oper. p. 294. Ed. Spanhem.

the

CHAP. the World: A Catastrophe, of which no other
 IV. tolerable account can ever be given by them,
 tho' the subtlest (a) of them have often labour'd to do it, but from that iniquitous Murder of the innocent *Jesus*, committed by their blind Forefathers, and the Curse deriv'd by them on their late Posterity, in that fatal Sentence, *His Blood be on us and on our Children.* (b). Matt. XXVII. 25.

Thus have we now before our Eyes one plain notorious *Fact*, verifying to the greatest exactness a prediction of our Lord's, which was pronounc'd at such a distance of time before the Event, and in such present Circumstances of the Jewish Affairs, when nothing threatned any Rupture between them and the *Romans*, and much less the utter Destruction of their City, that the Author of it must needs have been endued with a

The same Desolation which *Josephus* describes, is thus observ'd by that learned Physician Dr. *Rauwolf*. "Of the glorious City of *Jerusalem*, and of its vast Buildings, that made her famous before her Desolation, *there is at this Day nothing at all to be seen*: So that one might well doubt, *whether it ever stood there*, were it not for some holy Places, and its Situation, that give us Demonstration thereof. Dr. *Rauwolf's Travels*. Part. III. c. 3. Ed. Ray.

(a) See *Orobis* in *Limborch*. Amica Collat. p. 98 — 104.

(b) See the fine Reflections of Mr. *Addison* on these Heads. *Evidences of the Christian Religion*. Sect. VIII.

Know-

Knowledge of *Futurity*, far exceeding all *CHAP.*
the Powers of *Human Understanding*. And *IV.*
another Fact there is of the same publick
Nature, which is to us both an Argument
of the same *divine Knowledge* in Him who
foretold it, and likewise of some *divine Pow-*
er attending his Doctrine, I mean the swift
and extensive *Propagation* of *Christiani-*
ty, promis'd by our Lord at the very time,
when he told his Disciples (c) they should be
bated, afflicted, and kill'd (d) for his Name
sake, and fulfill'd at the very time, as all
History testifies, when *Infamy, Oppression,*
and *Persecution* were actually the dismal
Portion of his Followers; an Event impos-
sible to be foreseen in the first Dawn of the
Gospel, under such Opposition and Disgrace
from all the Powers on Earth, and in the
Hands of such mean and unpromising A-
gents as the twelve Apostles in appearance,
***without a clear Insight* into Ages not then**
existing, and unaccountable likewise to *Rea-*
son,* without some *miraculous Assistance
from above. This very *Fact*, I say, thus
publick and indisputable, must either per-
swade us, if consider'd attentively, that for-

(c) *Matt. XXIV. v. 9, 10, 14.*

CHAP. merly *Miracles* effected it, or we must own, what Mr. Boyle (e), and Chrysostom (f) before him observ'd, that without them it is itself a *Miracle*, not any way to be probably explain'd by *natural* Causes, by the Principles of Human Nature, or the common experienc'd Practise of Mankind. A due Sense therefore of these most wonderful Events, may and ought alone to raise in our Minds a very high Idea of the Author of our Faith, and dispose every wise Man to a more easy Reception of the History and Doctrine of it in the Sacred Gospel.

(e) Boyle. Christian Virtuoso. p. 102.

(f) Thus strong and elegant are the words of Chrysostom. Εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἴσως σημεῖα τότε, πῶς ἰλασθήσῃ, καὶ σωθήσῃ, καὶ τρέψῃ, καὶ διδάσῃ, καὶ κοινὰ γινώσκῃ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἰχθῆροι — καὶ οὐδὲ σῶσθαι ἔχοντες ἐπαγωγὴν, οὐ λόγον, οὐ δειφάνειαν, οὐ πλοῦτον, οὐ πόλιν, σὺ ἴθι, οὐ γινώσκῃ, σὺ ἐπιτιδιόμῃ, οὐ δίδω, σὺ ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων εὐδὲν, ἀλλὰ πάντα τὰ κοινὰ, ἰδιώματα, εὐτέλειαν, πρῆξιν, μῆτιν, ἀπείχου, καὶ πρὸς ἄλλους ἐκκληρῶν ἰσχύρι, καὶ πᾶσι κατὰ γυῖον ἰπιδῶν; — εἰπέ μοι πῶς τὸ ἀξίωμα ἔχει; ἅπρ γὰρ ἰσθῶν εἶπῃ, Εἰ σημεῖον χόρις ἐπέσαν, πολλὰ μείζον το θαύμα φαίνεται. Hom. in 1 Cor. p. 276. Tom. III. Ed. Sav.

C H A P. V.

Wherein the Nature of Christianity as distinguish'd from Deism, is briefly stated and explain'd; the Use and Authority of Scripture vindicated; and several Errors and Fallacies concerning it are detected and confuted.

THE Divine Authority, Instructions, and Powers of Jesus Christ and his Apostles being thus far establish'd, and the Means, by which all these are certified to the present Age, being explain'd from the Writings of the New Testament, whose Genuineness, Antiquity, and Purity has been likewise evinc'd at large; we are now prepar'd fully to examine into that extraordinary Representation, which you give us, *Philaletes*, of the Christian System. The account of it, which you call a *Definition* or *Description*, is as follows. "I take Christianity to be that most complete and perfect Scheme of Moral Truth and Righteousness, which was first preach'd to the World by Christ and his Apostles, and from them convey'd down to us under its own Evidence of immutable

CHAR. "mutable Rectitude, Wisdom, and Reason.

IV. "This definition, you imagine, takes in all

"that is essential to Christianity, or that can
"be receiv'd and allow'd as a constituent part

"of it. p. 97. Elsewhere "I must take

"Christianity, as to the Substance and Doc-

"trinal parts of it, to be a *Revival* of the

"Religion of Nature. p. 392. And after-

wards with some Variations and Enlarge-

ments it is thus defin'd. "I take, as you

"know, Christianity to be that Scheme or

"System of Deism, natural Religion, or mo-

"ral Truth and Righteousness, which was

"at first preach'd and propagated in the

"World, by Jesus Christ and his Apostles,

"and has since been convey'd down to us by

"probable Human Testimony, and historical

"Evidence, strengthened and confirm'd by

"the necessary, natural Truth, and intrinsic

"Goodness of the Doctrines themselves.

"This, Sir, is Christianity, and this is my

"reveal'd Religion. p. 412. Comp. p. 439.

Why indeed, Philalethes, it is very probable,

this may be your reveal'd Religion or Chris-

tianity (g); but 'tis so disagreeable to our

Scrip-

(g) The very manner of defining here is so contrary to all
Rules of Logic and plain Reason, that it must not pass off
with-

Scripture, that we should all be extremely surpris'd at it, were we not apprisd fully before of the Principles, on which it is founded. The Reader is therefore to be in-

without some Remark. Instead of being close and concise, and limited to the absolute Nature of the Thing, the Definition spreads out into relative Characters of it, that are quite extrinsic and foreign to the Thing itself; Christianity is a System of Deism, and a Revival of the Religion of Nature, which are Terms not expressing the real Constituents of Christianity, but a fancied Likeness or Relation of it to something else; as if I were to define this Moral Philosophy by its being a Revival of the Toland or Tindal-System, or a Jesuit the Religion of Protestants by a System of Atheism; as some have done; Or another, the Nature of a Swan by its likeness to a Goose, or the Form of a Man by its likeness to that of an Ape. In the next Place he defines Christianity not by any fix'd Rule or Standard *abstracta*, but pure Imagination and Will, giving it that sort of Form, which is most agreeable to his own Taste. He takes it to be a System of Deism; and by just the same Liberty, every Sect may define it by his own Head and Religious Notions; a Papist may call it that System of Roman Catholic Religion preach'd by Christ and his Apostles, a Socinian that pure Religion reviv'd by Socinus, and a Quaker that Spiritual Religion describ'd by Robert Barclay, and so on according to the private Notions and Humours of every whimsical Reformer. And what is more inexcusable, and is really mere trifling with the World, while he sets out with mighty Promises of correcting our present Systems, and shewing us by invincible Arguments what is true Christianity, purg'd from all the Dregs and Corruptions of Judaism, he fairly takes leave to beg the very Question in dispute, by defining it arbitrarily to be such, as he chuses to have it, without any Authority and Evidence whatsoever.

form'd

CHAP. form'd, that your System of Christianity, is
 V. not pretended to be *Scriptural* exactly, or
 strictly conformable to our present *New*
Testament; that you neither design or de-
 sire it to be, because, tho' a *Christian* upon
 the Foot of the *New Testament*, you cannot
 accept that Book for your *Rule* or *Guide* in
 the Case, nor allow it any proper *Authority*
 for deciding the Question. Nay he is to
 know, that for the sake of your *Christian*
Deism, we are really to pluck up true *Christi-*
an Religion by the Roots, leaving it desti-
 tute of any *authentic* Records, and suffici-
 ent Evidence of *divine* Original; and by
 that means of all its proper light and sup-
 port, all its *peculiar* Advantages and Ex-
 cellencies above *Human Systems*; and when
 it is thus shatter'd to pieces, and lies in ru-
 ins defac'd and destroy'd, it is plain, if we
 must have something with the Name of
Christianity, we can find it no where but in
Human Reason and *Natural Religion*, and
 thither at last we must go undoubtedly ac-
 cording to your prescription. Now that
 such and no better is the End and Foundati-
 on of your Scheme, is visible from your own
 words. You, it seems, were aware, that
 if we took our *New Testament* for the Test

or

or *Criterion* of Christianity, your Account of it would prove *false* and *defective*, as indeed would appear upon the least Acquaintance with that Book; every page almost in the *Gospels* and *Epistles* being a flat Contradiction to your Scheme. Therefore it is, you are so very industrious, First; To make the *Apostles* such *fallible* Men, and so little to be depended upon in any other Points of Doctrine, but those of *Moral Truth* and *Righteousness*, which carry their own Evidence along with them. And Secondly, for the same reason it is, that you muster up so many Objections against admitting our *Testament* for a *Rule of Faith*. You represent it as a Book so *interpolated* in one place, and *curtail'd* in another, so *difficult*, and *obscure*, and even *unintelligible* in all but *Moral Truths*, and the Cause of so many *Disputes*, and *Divisions* among *Christians*, that according to you we have no other way to settle an infallible *Faith*, but by laying its *Authority* wholly aside, and framing a *Christianity* without it. Your Character of *Scripture* is as follows. "The Books of the *New Testament* ought to be read *critically* ——— and not taken in the *gross*, as if every thing contain'd in them were at

CHAP. " first infallibly inspir'd, and no Corrup-

V. " tions could have ever since happen'd to
 them. — His Disciples and followers

" soon fell into very odd Notions about him,

" that were neither consistent with his Cha-

" racter and general Design, nor with the

" Religion, which he had preach'd and pro-

" pagated. They interpolated, added, and

" alter'd, several Passages in the original

" Books, which seem'd to represent this

" Prophet as the same Person, or the same

" Being with the *Supreme God*; and they

" ascrib'd several Miracles to him, in which

" there could have been only an exertion of

" Power without Wisdom or Goodness. In

" short, they soon patch'd up a Religion very

" different from that of *Nature*, joyn'd *Ju-*

" *daism* and *Christianity* together, and made

" Christ himself a *false Prophet*. p. 410.

So much for *Corruptions* in the *Testament*,

patching up, it seems, a *Religion very diffe-*

rent from that of Nature. All which, 'tis

plain, are thought necessary to be asserted,

in order to make Room for this *Christian*

System of *Deism*; but are in truth mere

Fictions and *Creatures* of your own, and

such as I affirm you will never prove from

Antiquity. But in the next place " our

" Books

Books are written in a *Language*, that we
do not well understand, and often in a
very obscure *Style*; from Occasions and
Circumstances, that we cannot be suffi-
ciently apprised of, to be always certain
of their meaning, or even so as not to
be often left under the greatest Doubts
and Uncertainties. — And as to *super-*
natural Truths and Doctrines, they are
deliver'd in such ambiguous Terms, and
capable of such different Constructions,
that no Man can ever be certain, that He
understands the true determinate Sense
of the Holy Ghost. p. 17, 18, 193. There-
fore you conclude, *Christianity* does not
so much depend upon the *Sense* and *Con-*
struction of antient *Authors*, but rather
on the most plain and necessary Truths,
such as are founded in the *eternal* and
immutable Reason and Fitness of things,
which must be *always* and every where
the same. For which reason you blame
very severely “the first Protestant Reform-
ers, for setting up the Scriptures in gross
as a dead *infallible* Rule, in opposition to
a *living* infallible Judge. For, it seems,
when they had got this infallible Rule
fairly translated into their own Language,
they

CHAP. "they could not *infallibly* understand and

V. "apply it; which made it to all Intent

W "and Purposes, a *fallible* Rule to them,

"and a mere *Nose of Wax*, which they could

"form and model according to their Plea-

"sure. And accordingly, the *Protestants*

"themselves by continual wrangling, divi-

"ding, and subdividing, excommunicating

"and damning one another, even about the

"*Essentials* and *Fundamentals* of Christi-

"anity have demonstrated to the whole

"World, that they are so far from having

"an *infallible* Rule, that they have in ef-

"fect no certain determinate Rule at all.

p. 393, 403. I protest, *Pbilaetbes*, you

lash the poor *Protestants* here in a Lan-

guage so like the *Jesuitical*, that were it not

for other *saving* Appearances elsewhere, I

should take you for one of that *Order*.

However let that be as it will, I believe,

the Foundation and Mystery of your Scheme,

and the Grounds of your former Defini-

tion of *Christianity* are now pretty clear to

the Reader. He may easily discern how

you come by your System of *Deism* from

Christ and his *Apostles*, namely by discard-

ing in effect the only Book, that should in-

form us concerning their Doctrine in *Fact*,

send-



sending every Man to his own *Reason*, to find it out there among his Principles of *Natural Religion*. For here must your Scheme of Christianity necessarily terminate at last; if we are not to be guided by our *Testament* at all as a *Law* or *Rule*, of certain Truth or *divine* Authority. For then let the Testament say what it will of the Doctrines, or Precepts of Christianity, it is only a *dead Letter* at best, so *fallible* upon all the Accounts beforemention'd, that we can trust it no farther in any Point, than where our *Reason* sees the truth of the Thing from its own former Stock of Ideas. And even the *Moral* Parts of it, those which you will please to admit into your System, must not be receiv'd implicitly, *because* they are deliver'd in *this Book*, or *because* they are *written Laws* of God, and *coming supernaturally* from Him, but merely *because* our *Reason* pronounces them *right* and *good*, and founded visibly in the *natural Relations and Fitnesses* of Things: And to us by this Scheme it would be just the same thing, if we had found them in *Cicero* and *Plutarch*: We should believe and obey them in both Cases upon just the same Principles, with as little regard to *Personal* Au-

thority

thority in one as in the other; and as we follow those two great Authors only in Doctrines, which we judge to be *true and reasonable*, so are we now, it seems, to take the same Liberty with those under the name of *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and whatever we find coinciding with our Notions of *Natural Religion*, that alone are we oblig'd to observe as *genuine Christianity*, and need not be concern'd at all with any other Articles. So that in short, by your Scheme, we may learn *Christianity* as well without the *Testament* as with it; we may only suppose, as you do, that *Christ* and his *Apostles* taught a System of pure *Deism*, and then 'tis but forming a System of *Deism* from our own Heads, and an *Orthodox Christian Religion* is produc'd at once (h)

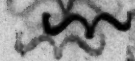
And

(h) Indeed so much is intimated to us in one Passage, which without this Key is quite unintelligible. Our Philosopher observes this grand difference between the *Moral* and *Positive* Parts of Christianity, "that the one (i. e. the *Moral*) could never have been corrupted and alter'd, but the Cheat must have appear'd to the *Common Sense* and *Reason* of Mankind, whereas the other (i. e. the *Positive*) might easily be mistaken or misrepresented, being capable of almost any Construction and Interpretation, according to Mens different Interests, Passions, and preconceiv'd Opinions. p. 442. This appears now very strange at first

Sight

And for my part I believe our *Christianity* CHAP.
might be much the same either way; and V.
of much the same Authority too, since your
Christian Character of the *New Testament*
is such, that the System of *Deism* must gain
very little by being taken from thence.
For one great Misfortune is, that the *Moral*
parts of that Book come down to us, with
no better external *Evidence* of their being
in fact the Doctrine of Christ or his Apostles,
than the other parts relating to Doctrines
of other kinds, and positive *Institutions*.
And if *Human Testimony* is so fallible,
as you represent it, that we cannot depend
upon it, for conveying to us that genuine

Sight, since the Point to be determin'd both as to the *Moral*
and *Positive Parts* of *Christianity* should be, what Doctrine
of either kind came in *Fact* from *Christ* and his Apostles;
and this one would think should be only known from *Writings*
convey'd to us under their Name: which Writings are
as capable of being corrupted in the *Moral* as the *Positive*
Parts; and while they are so, without any Light from other
Authors or Manuscripts, how will the *Common Sense* and
Reason of Mankind discover the Cheat in the *Moral Parts*
i. e. a *Misrepresentation in fact* of those *Moral Parts*? A Mystery,
no doubt, it is in the ordinary way of thinking; but
take only the *Common Sense* and *Reason of Mankind* for the
Standard of true *Christianity*, and then it is clear'd up at
once; for then you may learn *Christianity* as well *without*
Book as *with* it; and *Moral Finesses* delineate and fix it
immediately.



Doctrine of Christ or the Apostles, which they preach'd in *Fact* to the World, it is certainly no more to be depended upon in the *Moral* than any other. Whatever Evidence we may have of *Truth* from the Nature of the *Moral* Doctrines, we have no more Evidence of its being the *actual* Doctrine of *Christ*, than we have of *supernatural* and *positive* Matters being such. So that 'tis plain enough from these Observations, that if our *Christianity* is made, as you complain (p. 393.) an *Individuum vagum* and an *Ens rationis*, it is *you*, *Philalctes*, that make it so, not *Priests* or *judaizing Christians*; it is *you*, that send the *Wits* of *Mankind* a *Woolgathering*, as you phrase it, by thus discrediting *Historical Facts* and *Human Testimony*, by leaving them no certain *Rule* in *Scripture* of *Faith* and *Manners*, no proper *divine Authority* in *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*, no higher *Principles* of *Obedience*, no better *Aids* and *Motives* to it here, and no surer *Hopes* of *Glory* hereafter, than a mere *Human Philosopher* in these *Days* could afford to his *Disciples*. For tho' you do sometimes speak of your *Natural Duties* being enforc'd by stronger *Motives*, and encourag'd by the *Promises* of
more

from the Religion of Nature.

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CHAP.

V.

more effectual Aids and Assistances, of our being furnish'd with clearer Conceptions concerning a Future State, by Jesus Christ, than by any other Prophet or Lawgiver whatsoever, yet what does all this amount to but mere amusing Sounds, when our only Authority for all these Motives, Aids, Conceptions of a Future State &c. is the New Testament, that very Book, whose Text is with you so very precarious, doubtful, and fallible; and when, even supposing it to be faithful in all these Articles, we have according to you no stronger Testimony or Assurance for these things than the word of Jesus, whom no Miracles or Prophecies could prove infallible and impeccable? How are we then, I would know, of this time to be greatly mov'd or encourag'd to the Practise of our Duty, by things which you render yourself so uncertain and disputable? Alas, it is a mere Shadow instead of the Substance of Christianity, that you offer us; you are evidently, whether you perceive it or not, sapping the very Foundations, and destroying the Vitals of it, under a specious Pretence of reforming it from Jewish Corruptions. And while such is the mischievous Tendency of your Moral Philosophy, your Readers are to be

art.

CHAP. artfully cajol'd into a Notion, that your pious Aim and Design is only to refine Christianity, to restore it to its original Purity and Perfection, and to deliver the poor deluded Laity from Clerical Superstitions and Impostures! It is only, it seems, a *Diana of Ephesus*, a darling Idol of the *Hierarchy*, precious to them for the *golden Shrines* and *Gains* belonging to it, that you are resolv'd to pull down; and tho' all the *Silversmiths*, you expect, will be in an Uproar, yet no Impression will they make on your great Soul, and if they offer to touch your *Philosopher*, terrible is to be the Punishment, with which you threaten them from your Pen.

BUT whatever be our Fate, we shall still, I hope, stand firm to our *Testament* (i), as

(i) *Excellent is the Remark of Mr. Le Clerc on this Head.*
 “ Quisquis veri cognoscendi studio Novi Testamenti Libros
 “ legerit, non poterit diffiteri, quin in iis veritatis argumenta,
 “ quæ exposuit *Hugo Grotius*, ad unum omnia inveniantur.
 “ Itaque, si quæ beatæ Immortalitatis curâ tangatur, quæ
 “ in iis Libris credenda proponuntur amplecti, quæ præci-
 “ piuntur facere, quæ denique speranda docentur, iis confi-
 “ dere sui Officii esse intelliget. Itaque si quis de *Veritate*
 “ *Religionis Christianæ* se dubitare negaret, simulque *Dogma-*
 “ *tæ ejus*, præcepta, aut promissa fide & obsequio digna per
 “ omnia minime censeret, is secum ipse pugnaret, atque ex
 “ animo *Christianum non esse* manifestò ostenderet. *Cleric.*
De Eligend. Sentent. Sect. 1.

appear-

appearing by unquestionable Evidence to CHAP. V
 be the words of our Lord's Apostles; and as
 such, an *authentic and infallible* Rule of our
 Faith. It is our *Glory and Happiness* to de-
 rive our *Christianity* from such Instructors,
 and every *wise and sincere* Believer will pre-
 fer their Lessons, tho' convey'd by *Human*
Testimony, to that of all the *Philosophers* in
 the Universe. Now taking that Sacred
Book for our *Guide*, we define *Christianity*
 in general, to be the *Doctrines and Commands*
 of *Christ and (k) his Apostles* in all Points of
 Religion and Duty, *supernatural* as well as
natural, positive as well as *moral*. And we
 find this in fact to be a sort of *Christianity*,
 very different from that you describe, as a
 mere *System of Deism* and a *Revival of the*
Religion of Nature. For if you ask us, as
 in p. 17, 346. "What *Christianity* or the
 "*Gospel Revelation* is as *distinguish'd* from
 "the *Religion of Nature*; and when we
 "have thrown out this latter, what *Chris-*
 "*tianity* we should have left? I answer in
 short, the *Christian System* is distinguish'd

(k) Cum Christi Doctrinam dico, eam intelligo quæ —
 ex Christianorum omnium sententiâ aut disertè habetur in
 Libris Novi Testamenti, aut necessariâ consequentiâ ex iis
 solis deducitur. Cleric. ub. sup. Sect. III. conf. §. IV, V.

CHAP. from the Religion of Nature 1st. As to the means, by which it is made known to Mankind, viz. by a *supernatural Revelation* from God by *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*. The acknowledgment of which, together with the History of their Life, Works, &c. is evidently a *Fundamental Article* in it. 2^d. As to *Doctrines* and *Precepts*, peculiar to it. Such are the Doctrine of one Mediator (1) between God and Man, Christ Jesus the Blessed Messiah and Son of God, by whose Merits, Intercession, and Atonement we obtain *remission* of our Sins, and *Eternal Life* and Happiness. 3. The Doctrine of a *Covenant* (m) between God and Man, offering and *ensuring* to Mankind by express *Stipulation*, certain Benefits and Privileges of the highest Importance, on our due performance of certain Conditions. 4. The Doctrine of a *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* (n), all plainly represented in Scripture as *divine* in Nature, and concurring respectively and eminently in the great Work of our *Redemption*, and therefore propos'd all as the high

(1) Dr. Morgan. Pref. to Tracts. p. 16, 17, 18.

Le Clerc. Prolegom. ad Hist. Eccl. Sect. III.

(m) Pufendorf. Jus Fecial. Divin. p. 142, seq.

(n) Le Clerc. ub. sup. Cap. I. N. 8. — 17.

Objects of our Faith and Worship. 5. The CHAP.

Doctrine of extraordinary *Aids and Grace*

from the *Holy Spirit*, conferr'd on all true and sincere Believers, in consequence of Christ's Ascension into Heaven, and Entrance into his glorious Kingdom (o). And

lastly 6. The Doctrine of a future *Resurrection of the Body* to Life Immortal (p), and

(o) Dr. Clarke. *Evidences. &c.* p. m. 234.

Sherlock. *Vindicat. of Defense of Stillington*. p. 264, &c.

(p) I mention this Article not as peculiar to Christianity (being certainly receiv'd before it among the Jews) but as unknown to Natural Religion, and therefore so far distinguishing the former from the latter. Our Philosopher indeed insinuates the contrary in one Place, when he says, that "Zoroaster himself had profess'd and taught it among the Persians four hundred Years before, and the Persian Magoi had receiv'd and taught the same Doctrine for many hundred Years before Zoroaster, who did not pretend to introduce any new Religion, but to restore the true old Abrahamic Religion. All which, he thinks, is made very clear by Dr. Hyde's Book *De Religione Veterum Persarum*. p. 348, 349. But he might have observ'd, what the same Dr. Hyde informs us, that Zoroaster himself was of Jewish Extraction, and educated among the Jews, and well vers'd in the Books of the Old Testament and the antient Traditions. See his *Religio Vet. Persarum*. Cap. 10. p. 176. Cap. 24. p. 314, 315, 316. For which Reason He must be consider'd as a Jew in this Doctrine, and deriving it like them from the Patriarchs or Prophets, i. e. from Revelation not the Light of Nature. And as to the Persian Magi, if they did receive and teach the same Doctrine so many hundred Years before Zoroaster

CHAP. and a future Judgment of all Mankind, by

V. Jesus Christ in the Glory of his Father. These



are
after, they had it likewise from the ancient Patriarchs the Posterity of Noah, as the same Dr. Hyde supposes. p. 175. But indeed tho' the learned Doctor does say this of them he produces no proper Evidence throughout his Book, of the Fact itself; i. e. That the Magi did teach a Resurrection of the Body before Zoroaster. He tells us himself, that we know nothing of the Persian Religion, while Media and Persia were in subjection to the Assyrians for a 1000 Years together (Ch. 21. p. 275.) and that after the Medes had shook off the Assyrian Yoke the first Lawgiver in Religion amongst them before Zoroaster was Keyomáras, and what System of Religion his was; he could inform us from no better Authority than Sharistani a modern Arabian; and all that Sharistani himself knew of it was from modern Persians or Indians, some of whom were call'd by the Name of Keyomarthites as the followers of the old Keyomáras; and what they knew of it, we may guess by their making Keyomáras the first Man Adam. (See Cap. 22. p. 295.) So that here is no authentic Testimony for this Doctrine of the Magi, even for one Year before Zoroaster, much less many hundred as the Philosopher asserts. Therefore Dr. Prideaux judiciously attributes the Doctrine of the Resurrection to Zoroaster himself, as the Founder of it among the Persians. (See his Connection Part. I. B. IV. p. m. 305. 8vo.) and leaves it entirely out of the Magian Religion, which subsisted before him. (See B. iii. p. 252, 253.)

As to the Greeks and Romans, it is well known and has been often shewn at large, that most of them were ignorant of any such Doctrine, and thought it incredible to the last Degree, and some of them pronounc'd it to be absolutely impossible, as Pliny the Elder, and Æschylus expressly; (Plin. L. II. c. 7. Æschyl. Eumenid. V. 650, 651.) which last Position Chrysippus indeed had Wisdom enough to disown, in a curious Passage preserv'd by Lactantius (Instit. L. VII. c. 23.)

from the Religion of Nature.

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are the principal Articles of *Doctrine*, which belong to the *Christian Religion as such*; to explain all, which in their full Extent, with their several Branches and Dependencies, is not necessary at all in this place, nor does it fall within the Compass of my Design. As to *Precepts*, I shall mention notwithstanding your Raillery upon them, those two of the *positive* kind, concerning *Baptism* and the *Holy Communion*; Institutions expressly appointed by Christ himself, and having clearly a *rational Connection* with such a *positive Oeconomy*, as the *Christian* is, and very properly requir'd as necessary to that *End*, which too many will not consider, viz. Of procuring extraordinary Degrees of Favour and Benefits from God, arising from a *positive Relation*, and a *positive Covenant* thro' the Gospel, between

c. 23.) but neither He nor any of the Stoicks or others, who had some Notion of a future Reunion of the Human Souls to new Bodies, in their grand *μετεμψυχωσις* or Renovation of all things, grounded this on any Principles of Reason, but deriv'd it solely from obscure Traditions among the Egyptians and Persians. It was the Gospel alone, which brought Life and Immortality to Light in this Sense, and gave full Assurance and Evidence of it; as the learned Tertullian said, *Fiducia Christianorum, resurrectio Mortuorum*. De Resurr. Carn. Cap. 1.

God

CHAP. God and Man. Besides these we have other

V. Precepts of the *moral* Kind, *extending and exalting* those of Nature on the same *Subjects*, in a *Degree* unknown to your *Natural Religion*. Such are those which enlarge the common Principles of Benevolence and Charity, to our *doing good to them that hate us*, to the *very love of our Enemies*, to our *blessing them that curse us*, and *praying for them who despitefully use us*. Instructions worthy of the great Saviour and Lover of Mankind! The Design and Tendency of which was to subdue and heal that bitter and malevolent Spirit, which has produc'd such Mischiefs in the World; to extinguish the very Sparks of all Feuds and Animosities, and promote universal Peace and Harmony.

Thus you may see in this little Compendium, how *much Christianity* will remain to us, when *we have thrown out the Religion of Nature*. But besides the *peculiar Doctrines or Precepts* of it, there is even in those *Parts*, which contain what you stile the *Religion of Nature and Deism*, a *peculiar Advantage and Excellence* from our *Scriptures* exceedingly valuable in itself, and either not at all or not easily to be

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Quod er
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qui nihil

be had without them. Such is 1. That CHAP. V.
 great Advantage in point of *Authority*, as the *Duties* and *Principles* of it are deliver'd in plain *written* Instructions, level to all Capacities, by Men speaking and acting by the *Power* and *Direction* of God himself. This Circumstance of being consider'd as the *Word* of God, adds a *Weight* and *Efficacy* to them, which a mere *Philosophical* Lecture, and Reasonings from the *Natural Relations* and *Fitnesses* of Things would never be attended with; especially as to the Bulk of Mankind, who have neither *Leisure*, nor *Taste*, nor *Attention* enough for abstract Speculations of this kind; which was one great Reason, why the *moral* Instructions of the *antient* Philosophers had so little Influence on the World about them, and why the Prevalence of *Christianity* in the *Primitive* Times produc'd that wonderful Reformation (9) in the *Manners* of the Multitude,

(9) To this Purpose are those eloquent words of *Lactantius*, once a *Heathen* himself. Instit. E. III. c. 26, 27.

Quod ergo illi poscente natura faciendum esse senserunt; sed tamen neque ipsi facere potuerunt, neque à philosophis fieri posse viderunt, sola hæc esset doctrina celestis: quia sola sapientia est. Illi scilicet persuadere cuiquam potuerunt, qui nihil persuadent etiam sibi? Aut cuiusquam cupiditates

opprimunt; iram temperabunt, libidinem coërcebunt, cum ipsi & cedant vitii; & fateantur, plus valere naturam? *Dei* autem præcepta, quia & simplicia, & vera sunt, quantum valeant in animis hominum, quotidiana experimenta demonstrant. Da mihi virum, qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrenatus: paucissimis *Dei* verbis tam placidum, quam ovem, reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem: jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, & pecuniam suam plenis manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris, ac mortis: jam cruce, & igne, turum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, ganeonem: jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis. Da crudelem, & sanguinis appetentem: jam in veram clementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da injustum, insipientem, peccatorem: continuo & æquus, & prudens, & innocens erit. Uno enim lavacro malitia omnis abolebitur. Tanta *divina* sapientie vis est: ut in hominis pectus infusa, matrem delictorum, stultitiam uno semel impetu expellat; ad quod efficiendum, non mercede, non libris, non lucubrationibus opus est. Gratis ista sunt, facile, cito: modo pateant aures, & pectus sapientiam sitiat. Nemo vereatur nos, aquam non vendimus; nec solem mercede præstamus. *Dei* fors uberrimus, atque plenissimus patet cunctis; & hoc caeleste lumen universis oritur, quicumque oculos habent. Num quis hæc philosophorum aut unquam præstitit, aut præstare, si velit, potest? Qui cum ætates suas in studio philosophiæ conterant; neque alium quenquam, neque seipsos (si natura paululum obstitit) possunt facere meliores. Itaque sapientia eorum, ut plurimum efficiat, non excindit vitia, sed abscondit. Pauca vero *Dei præcepta* sic totum hominem immutant, & exposito vetere novum reddunt, ut non cognoscas eundem esse.

Quid ergo? nihilne illi simile præciunt? Immo per multa: & ad verum frequenter accedunt, sed *nihil ponderis* habent illa præcepta, quia sunt *humana*; & *auctoritate* majori;

Heathens themselves (r). Again 2. Another great Advantage from thence is in respect of *Clearness* and *Certainty* as to many *speculative* Points, concerning the *Nature* and *Attributes* of God, and the *divine Providence*; upon a due Apprehension and Assurance of which, must depend in a great measure the Practice of true *Piety* and *Virtue*. Now these are things so abstruse in themselves, and so remote from the *common Reason* of Mankind, as would involve them, were their *Reason* their only Guide, in numberless Difficulties, Obscurities, and Uncertainties; such, as we know, the most elevated Geniuses of *Pagan Antiquity* could never surmount, and drew from *Cicero* himself in the Person of *Cotta* that complaining Wish, *Utinam tam facile vera invenire possem, quam falsa convincere! I wish I could as easily find out what is true, as I*

non, id est, divina illa, carent. Nemo igitur credit; quia tam se hominem putat esse, qui audit; quam est ille, qui præcipit.

(r) Hence did *Julian* himself recommend to his *Heathen Pontiff Arfacius* the Example of the Christians in *Charity* and *Regularity* of Behaviour, to which Virtues he ascribes in a great measure the Prevalence of the Christian Religion. Epist. 49. ad Arfac. Ed. Spanh.

CHAP. *can disprove what is false (s).* How then

V. must the Vulgar and Unletter'd Part of Mankind be puzzled and perplex'd on those Subjects! How wretchedly would they wander in the dark, as all the *Pagans* do at this Day throughout the World! Whereas a few plain Sentences from *Scripture* shall in one Day give more Light to their Understandings upon these Heads, than all the antient *Philosophers* before the Christian *Ara* could acquire in their whole Lives. This every one acquainted with *Antiquity* must know to be true of those Men. So likewise 3. A farther Advantage to the World from Christianity is with regard to the *Motives, Encouragements, and Assistances* to the Practise of our *natural Duties*. It has brought *Life and Immortality to light* in a proper Sense, as it assures us expressly of a *Future State of Rewards and Punishments*, to be certainly distributed by the Judge of all Men hereafter, according to our Actions in this Life. For granting it possible, that by the Light of *Nature* such a State might be prov'd to the highest

(1) *Cicer. Nat. Deor. L. I. c. 32.*

See what he says in his own Person, in the 1st and 2^d Chapters throughout, of the same Book.

Degree of *Probability*, affording very rea-
 sonable Grounds for *Hopes* and *Expectations*
 of that kind; yet I may assert here, as
 in the Article above, that such a Disqui-
 sition would lie too deep for the *Bulk* of
Mankind, and would be clouded with so
 much Confusion and Intricacy, that to
 them it could never produce that Convic-
 tion, which might effectually influence their
 Actions in this Life, against either the *Plea-
 sures of Sin* or the Troubles of *Virtue*. Ac-
 cordingly we find, that the antient Sages
 themselves, when they argued this Point
 from the Principles of Reason, were lost
 and bewilder'd in it to the last, and could
 never give themselves or others any tole-
 rable Satisfaction about it: All which has
 been lately represented in the strongest Co-
 lours by a learned Writer (t), and supersedes
 any farther Account of it. Whereas the
Gospel on the other Side affords to every
 Reader at once a full *Assurance* of this Fu-
 ture State, and reflects so much Light even
 upon *Reason* concerning it, that now little
 less than *Demonstration* of its certainty has
 proceeded from that *natural Faculty*. Nay

(t) Mr. Warburton. Divine Legation of Moses. B. III.
 Sect. 2, 3.

CHAP. so quick and vigorous a Brightness did it
 V. receive from thence, that *Athenagoras* in
 the second Century, tho' quite in the dark
 when a *Philosopher* at *Athens*, could, as soon
 as he became a *Christian*, dispute presently
 upon it with a Strength not misbecoming
 the most penetrating *Modern*, and by many
 Topics in greatest request at this time (u).
 So that now by the clear Knowledge of this
 great Point, deriv'd to all Degrees of Men
 from Christ and his Apostles, the Practise
 of universal Righteousness is establish'd up-
 on a sure Foundation: We have now suffi-
 cient Encouragement, to persevere in the
 strictest Adherence to all Piety and Vir-
 tue, in all Cases and under all Circum-
 stances of Life.

BUT not only are these great Sanctions
 to the Law of Nature thus manifested and
 ascertain'd to all Men by the Gospel, but
 likewise a present Assistance from God's
 Holy Spirit is promis'd expressly to all sin-
 cere Believers, towards the right Perform-
 ance of his Duty. The Spirit, says St. Paul,
helpeth our Infirmities, enlightens the Eyes
of our Understanding, and strengthens us with

(u) See his Book *De Resurrectione*.

might in the inner Man (w). Agreeably to CHAP. that intimation of our Lord, *If ye being Evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him* (x). This assurance adds new Life and Vigour to Religion and Virtue, as it shews us, how all Obstructions to the Practise of it, either *within* or *without* us may successfully be conquer'd, if we are not wanting to ourselves; how the *weakness* of our Nature may be supported, the depravities of it corrected, and the force of all Temptations to Sin resisted and defeated; by which means our Endeavours are quickned, our Resolutions fortified, our Appetites and Passions restrain'd, and our Rational Powers gain their due Ascendant and Authority. And the good Effects of this divine Assistance has been visible in all Ages since the Rise of *Christianity*, and is even at this Day, notwithstanding the many Corruptions in the Christian World; there being evidently among Christians of *all Conditions*, more numerous and more shining Examples of Right-

(w) *Rom.* VIII. 26. *Ephes.* I. 17. III. 16.

(x) *Luke.* II. 13. Comp. ABp. Tillotson. Sermon. 147. Vol. III. Fol.

CHAP. *reasons, Holiness, and true Virtue, than*
 V. *ever were found in any of the most civiliz'd*
 Nations, and most improv'd by Philosophy
 in the *Heathen* World. From all which
 Considerations laid together, did the great
 Mr. Boyle undertake to shew at large, in
 how eminent a Degree a true *Greatness of*
Mind was advanc'd by *Christianity* (y) in eve-
 ry respect, above all other Systems or Insti-
 tutions whatsoever. The justness of whose
 sentiments upon it in a small *imperfect*
 Essay obliges us to regret exceedingly the
 irreparable Loss of the rest.

BUT there is one more important Arti-
 cle, in which Christianity differs from and
 excells the *Religion of Nature*; and that is,
 in revealing *positively* and clearly to Man-
 kind, how *Sinners* may obtain the Favour
 of God and eternal Salvation: A Point in
 which the Virtue, Peace, and Happiness of
 Mankind is greatly concern'd, and as to
 which the Religion of *Nature* can afford us
 no *competent* Satisfaction. This Truth it is
 needless for me to prove and explain at
 large, having lately been discuss'd by ve-

(y) Boyle's *Greatness of Mind promoted by Christianity*,
 subjoyn'd to his *Christian Virtues*.

ryable Hands (z), with great Judgment CHAP.
and Solidity, without any Reply from the V.
Deists, that I know of. I shall therefore only
subjoyn the words of Dr. Clarke upon this
head. "The *Acceptableness of true Repen-*
"tance in the Sight of God, and the certain
"Assurance of Pardon upon such Repen-
"tance, which the *Christian Religion* af-
"fords us, is a most powerful and necessary
"Motive to frail and sinful Creatures, to
"encourage and support them effectually
"in the Practise of their Duty. 'Tis in-
"deed in *general* evidently most agreeable
"to right reason, and to Men's natural No-
"tions of God, to believe him placable and
"merciful and willing to *forgive*. But
"since at the same time it cannot be prov'd
"by any Arguments from Reason, that God
"is oblig'd to forgive; and 'tis confessedly
"evident, that it becomes the Supreme
"Governour of the Universe, to vindicate
"the Honour and Authority of his Laws and
"Government, to give some Evidences of

(z) Dr. Conybeare. Def. of Reveal'd Religion. c. 2. p.
112 — 130.

Dr. Berriman. Boyle Lect. Sermon. II.

Dr. Stebbing. Def. of Dr. Clarke. p. 40 — 52.

Mr. Leland. Answer to Christianity as old &c. Vol. I.
p. 170 — 204.

" his

CHAP. "his *Hatred* and *Indignation* against *Sin*,

V. "and *sometimes* to prevent Sinners from a-

W "busing his *Mercy* and *Patience*, no less

"than that 'tis agreeable to his infinite

"*Wisdom* and *Goodness*, to suffer his An-

"ger to be by some means appeas'd; —

"nothing can be imagin'd more *reasonable*

"and *satisfactory* to the Mind of Man, than

"such a positive Declaration of the *Accep-*

"*tableness* of *sincere Repentance*, and such an

"*authentic Assurance* of *Pardon* and For-

"giveness thereupon, as under the *Christian*

"Dispensation the Divine Goodness and

"*Mercy* has found means to afford unto us,

"in *such manner*, as is at the same time a-

"bundantly *consistent* with the *Honour* and

"*Dignity* of the *Laws* of God, and with

"his *irreconcilable Hatred* against all Un-

"*righteousness* and *Sin* (a).

AND again elsewhere. "From the con-

"sideration of the *Goodness* and *Merciful-*

"ness of God, the Philosophers did indeed

"very reasonably *hope*, that God would

"shew himself *placable* to Sinners, and

"might be some way reconcil'd: But when

"we come to enquire more particularly,

"what *Propitiation* he will *accept*, and in

(a) Dr. Clarke. Evidences &c. Prop. XI.

"what

“ *what manner this Reconciliation must be* CHAP.
 “ *made; here Nature stops, and expects* V.
 “ *with impatience the Aid of some particu-*
 “ *lar Revelation. That God will receive*
 “ *returning Sinners, and accept of Repen-*
 “ *tance instead of perfect Obedience, they*
 “ *cannot certainly know, to whom he has*
 “ *not declar'd that he will do so; For tho'*
 “ *this be the most probable and only means*
 “ *of reconciliation, that Nature suggests;*
 “ *yet whether this alone will be sufficient,*
 “ *or whether God will not require some-*
 “ *thing further, for the Vindication of his*
 “ *Justice, and the Honour and Dignity of*
 “ *his Laws and Government, and for the ex-*
 “ *pressing more effectually his Indignation a-*
 “ *gainst Sin, before he will restore Men to*
 “ *the Priviledges they have forfeited, they*
 “ *cannot be satisfactorily assur'd. For it*
 “ *cannot positively be prov'd from any of*
 “ *God's Attributes, that he is absolutely ob-*
 “ *lig'd to pardon all Creatures all their Sins*
 “ *at all times, barely and immediately upon*
 “ *their repenting. There arises therefore*
 “ *from Nature no sufficient comfort to Sin-*
 “ *ners, but anxious and endless Sollicitude*
 “ *about the means of appeasing the Dei-*
 “ *ty. — Wherefore there was plainly a*
 “ *necessity*

CHAP. "necessity of some particular Revelation

V. "to discover what Expiation God would

"accept for Sin, by which the Authority,

"Honour, and Dignity of his Laws might

"be effectually vindicated (b).

To conclude; I must farther observe, that the Preeminence of Christianity in every Article abovemention'd beyond all Natural Religion, appears with still greater Advantage and Lustre, if compar'd with that which really and in fact is the Religion of Nature, i. e. with the Religion deriv'd solely from the Light of Nature. For this in Truth is a quite different thing from the Religion of Nature drawn up in our modern Systems among Christians; and we grossly delude ourselves, if we judge of one by the other (c). It is true they are deduc'd from Principles of Reason in a close abstracted Method, but it is by a Reason not in a natural State of Light and Strength, but improv'd to a high Degree by previous Discoveries from Revelation, and learned Discourses of Christians on Morality and Religion. And thus "Seeing of late, several excellent Systems of Morals, under the Title of the

(b) Id. ibid. p. 183, 184, 200. Ed. 5.

(c) See Mor. Philos. p. 145.

“Principles of Natural Religion, that dis-
 “claim the Aid of Revelation, we are apt
 “to think them *indeed* discoveries of natu-
 “ral Reason, and so regard their excellen-
 “cies as an Objection to the *Necessity* of any
 “farther Light. The pretence is plausible;
 “but surely there must be some mistake at
 “the bottom; and the immense Difference
 “in Point of Perfection, between these
 “imaginary productions of Reason, and
 “those *real* ones of the most Learned An-
 “tients, will increase our Suspicion. The
 “Truth is, these *Modern* System-Writers
 “had an Aid, which as they do not acknow-
 “ledge, so I perswade myself, they did not
 “perceive. This Aid were the *true* prin-
 “ciples of Religion, deliver’d by *Revelation*;
 “Principles so clear and evident, that they
 “are now mistaken to be amongst our first
 “and simplest Ideas. But those who un-
 “derstand Antiquity, know the Matter to
 “be far otherwise.

“I CANNOT, says the same Writer,
 “better illustrate the State and Condition of
 “the *Human Mind*, before Revelation,
 “than by the following Instance: A Sum-
 “mary of the *Atomic* Philosophy is deliver’d
 “in the *Theætetus* of *Plato*. Yet being de-
 “liver’d

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"liver'd without its Principles, when *Plato's*
 "Writings at the Revival of Learning, came
 "to be Studied and Commented; this Pas-
 "sage remain'd altogether unintelligible:
 "For there had been an Interruption in the
 "Succession of that School for many Ages:
 "And neither *Marsilius Ficinus*, nor *Serra-*
 "*nus* could give any reasonable account of
 "it. But as soon as *Des Cartes* had reviv'd
 "that Philosophy, and excogitated its Prin-
 "ciples anew, the Mist removed, and every
 "one saw clearly (tho' *Cudworth*, I think,
 "was the first who brought it into Obser-
 "vation (*d*) that *Plato* had given a curious
 "and exact account of that excellent Physio-
 "logy. And *Des Cartes* was now thought
 "by some, to have borrow'd his Original
 "Ideas from thence; tho', but for *his* Re-
 "vival of the *Atomic* Principles, that Pas-
 "sage had remain'd in Eternal Obscurity.
 "Just so it was with respect to *Human*
 "*Knowledge*: Had not Revelation discover'd
 "the *true* Principles of Religion, they had
 "without doubt continued for ever un-
 "known. Yet on Discovery, they appear'd
 "so consonant to *that* Knowledge, that Men

(*d*) See *Cudworth*. Syft. Intell. Cap. I. §. vii. Ed. *Moss*.

" are

are apt to mistake them for the Product
of it (e). CHAP. V.

Now what, *Philalethes*, is *Christianity* after all a mere *System of Deism*, nothing else but a *revival of the Religion of Nature*? When all know, it differs so widely from it, in the *Number and Kind of its Doctrines and Precepts*, and in its *Authority, Uses and Benefits* to Mankind? Impossible! If we take our Account of it from *Scripture*, and not from our own *Inventions and Fancies*. For every Article of *Christianity* recited above is deliver'd there as clearly and intelligibly in the *general*, as any of your *moral Doctrines* whatsoever. But it seems, you cannot agree to this, and urge some strange objections against it, which are now to be consider'd. They are all, I think, reducible to these two general Heads. 1st. The Obscurity and Ambiguity of the *Scripture* as to Points of pure *Revelation*, being capable of various *Senses*, and liable necessarily to various Interpretations, on account of the different Apprehensions, Capacities, and Talents of Men. 2^d. The perpetual Disagreements and Diffensions in *Fact* of *Christians* concerning those Points.

(e) Mr. Warburton, Div. Legat. of Moses. p. 414, 415.

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As to the first, You say " That no Man
 " can *ever* be certain, that he understands
 " the true, determinate Sense of the Holy
 " Ghost or inspir'd writers, concerning such
 " supernatural Truths and Doctrines, which
 " are deliver'd in *ambiguous* Terms, and
 " cloath'd with Expressions capable of very
 " different Constructions. Men of different
 " Reach, Capacity, and Talents, *must needs*
 " think differently, or understand the same
 " verbal Proposition, in different Senses,
 " that is, they *must believe* different Doc-
 " trines concerning the same thing. And
 " thus as our *infallible* Rule is not to be *in-*
 " *fallibly* understood and applied, we have
 " no certain *determinate* Rule at all. Upon
 " which you ask, is it not strange, that God
 " should *reveal* a *Religion* as of any *Necessi-*
 " *ty* or *Use* to Mankind, which is not to be
 " understood in any *one* certain determinate
 " Sense, but may be taken in as many *dis-*
 " *ferent* Senses, as there are different Capa-
 " cities, Apprehensions, and ways of think-
 " ing among Men? This surely, could not
 " in any propriety of Speech be call'd a *Re-*
 " *ligion*, but must be a vast Number of *Re-*
 " *ligions*, perhaps almost as many as there
 " are Men. And this shews, how much
 " the

"the word *Religion* is abus'd, whenever CHAP.

"it is applied to such intricate Points. pag.

"17, 18, 403.

WHAT a mighty Dust is here artfully rais'd, to blind our Eyes, and confound our Understandings! The very same, which the *Papists* are ever throwing round about us, for the sake of their *infallible* Judge in Controversies! But I hope we may be able to see thro' the Mist, from whatever Quarter it comes upon us. I say therefore plainly and directly, that a Man may be as certain of understanding the real Sense of the Holy Ghost in these Doctrines *supernatural*, as he may be of understanding it in any other Doctrines, *equal* Talents and Attention suppos'd. But I mean as to the *general Truth* of the Doctrine, not the particular *Modus* or *Nature* of the Things. And the greatest Fallacy of your Paragraph lies in confounding these two things together, and likewise the *Sense* of *Scripture* as to each. As to the former, the Language of *Scripture* is no more obscure, than it is in any Points of *natural* Religion, of the like *speculative* kind. And if it is obscure in the latter, it is so from the *nature* of the things, being *inadequate* to our Conceptions, as many *Truths*

CHAP. are in your natural Religion. Thus for in-

V. stance in those very Points, which you give

as Examples of *Obscurity*. The *Pre-existence of Christ from the Beginning*, as a Being superior to all Angels, Principalities and Powers is thus express'd by St. Paul. He is before all things, and by him all things subsist; the first-Born of all Creatures; by him were all things Created, that are in Heaven and that are in the Earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers; all things were created by Him and for Him (f). And hence is He stil'd by St. John, the Word who was in the beginning with God; by whom all things were made; and without whom nothing was made that was made (g). Now where is the great *Obscurity* in these Passages, as to the general Truth of Christ's *Preexistence* before all things and Beings under God? The words are as plain to us in this Point, as they would be, if they had taught the *Preexistence* of God himself before all things. Why therefore is not one to be as easily believ'd as the other? Or why must we leave this Article out of our Christian System, be-

(f) Coloss. I. v. 15, 16, 17.

(g) John. I. 1, 2, 3.

cause we have perhaps no perfect and distinct CHAP.
 Idea of this Preexistence, any more than V.
 that of God the *Father's* Preexistence out of
natural Religion? For this to our *Conceptions*
 is full as dark as the other, and tho' certainly
 true, yet in the *modus* of it puzzling to the
 last Degree, and utterly inexplicable by all
 our Philosophy. So that, tho' we may not
 understand in the whole extent the deter-
 minate *Sense* of the inspir'd writers about
 either one or the other, yet we all may un-
 derstand enough of it, to know what is the
 general Truth deliver'd by them, and so
 much as we do know, we ought to receive
 into our Faith. So again, in the Point of
 our Lord's *Incarnation*. The great Person
 describ'd before, or the *Word*, we are told
 was *made Flesh, taking upon him the Form of*
a Servant, and the Likeness of Men, and
dwelt among us (b) Where is the difficulty
 of these Sentences? Is not every Syllable
 here intelligible to common Capacities?
 Cannot any Man understand in general,
 what is meant by that High Being the
Word's being *made Flesh*, and *dwelling a-*
mong us in the Likeness of Men &c? And if
 he can, what should hinder his being ob-

(b) John. I. 14.

Philipp. II. 7, 8.

CHAP. lig'd to believe and acknowledge this Truth?

V.



Indeed he may not conceive, in what manner precisely, the Word was *incarnate*, and how the two *Natures* were united; but neither can he conceive, how the *Human Soul* is united to the *Body*, and yet, I presume, he may be satisfied clearly, that so it is, and why not in the other Case likewise, when *inspir'd* Apostles assure him expressly of the *Fact*? The same may be observ'd of the *Holy Trinity*. The Scripture declares, that besides the *Father*, there is a *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, in whose Name all *Christians* are requir'd to be Baptiz'd, as the Objects of our Faith, Honour, and Worship (*i*); and to whom such Characters and Attributes are plainly ascrib'd by the Apostles, as suit no Being inferior to *Divine*. Hence it is, that Dr. Clarke laid it down as a Truth very clear and certain from the Scripture, that "the *Father* of all things has existed from the Beginning, a *second divine* Person, which is his *Word* or *Son*, and with both a *third divine* Person, which is the *Spirit* of the *Father* and the *Son* (*k*). For the

(i) See this explain'd fully by Dr. Waterland. *Lady Moyer's* Sermon. VIII.

(k) Dr. Clarke. *Scripture Doctrine*. &c. p. 234. Ed. 3.
Proof

Proof of which he has produc'd a great CHAP.
Number of Passages from the Scripture, ex- V.
press to the Point (l). And hence it was, that
Episcopus and *Le Clerc*, who had never
seen this *Doctrine* in the *Testament*, if it had
not been plainly deliver'd there, speak of it
roundly (m) as the clear indisputable Doc-
trine of the *Scripture*, following the *Remon-*
strants Confession (n) to the same purpose.
Now if so, if the *Scripture* is clear thus far,
in teaching the *Existence*, the *divine Pow-*
ers and *Attributes* of the *Son* and *Holy Spi-*
rit, and their particular *Relation* and *Bene-*

(l) Ibid. Part. I. Ch. ii, iii.

(m) Certum est in Scripturâ trium nominatim mentio-
nem fieri, quibus *Natura Divina* tribuitur, Patris scilicet,
Filii, & Spiritus Sancti. *Episcopus*. Institut. Theol. L. IV.
p. 332.

Hoc addendum, quod illi (Judæi) negant, esse in illâ unâ
Substantiâ Divinâ distinctionem, quâ fit ut in eâ distinguan-
tur *Pater*, *Filius*, & *Spiritus Sanctus* — quam necesse est,
sine divisione ullâ, tribus esse communem, quamvis ejus rei
rationem ignoremus. Ita autem sibi sentiendum existimant
Christiani, propter multa *Novi Testamenti* loca. *Le Clerc*
Prolegom. in Hist. Eccles. p. 97.

(n) *Filius* ergo & *Spiritus Sanctus* licet — a *Patre* verè di-
stincti, ejusdem tamen cum *Patre Deitatis* consortes sunt;
prout inter alia maximè probatur ex *divinis* nominibus seu
titulis, item ex *divinis* proprietatibus & operationibus, quæ
utrique in *Sacris Literis* apertè passim tribuuntur. Confess.
Remonstr. cap. iii. ap. *Episcop.* Oper. Vol. II.

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V.



science to us, and our Duty and Obligations to both, to the one as our Redeemer, Lord, and Governor, and to the other as the constant *Helper of our Inj. mities*, and the Author of *Grace and Sanctification*, by which we are deliver'd from the *Power of Sin*; and commands all *Christians* to be *Baptiz'd* in the *Name* of these two Persons, as well as in that of the *Father*, why are we not to follow and obey the Scripture in these Instructions and Commands, which are *clear*, because it may be obscure in other Points relating to these *divine* Persons, as *how* the *Son* is *generated* of the *Father*, and the other *proceeds* from both, and *how* each *divine* Person is so *distinct* from the other, and so intimately *united* with all at the same time, as to make up but *One* God blessed for ever? Surely tho' we are not inform'd explicitly of these mysterious things, and accordingly are not oblig'd to *understand* or *believe* the particular *Modus* of them, yet we *may* and *ought* to receive the other Articles concerning them, of which we are *plainly* inform'd. So again, as to Christ's *Oblation* and *Atonement* for the Sins of Mankind; the Scripture speaks as plainly, as words can express it, that Christ Jesus is the

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the one Mediator between God and Man, a Ransom for all, a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, that He was made a Curse for us, an Offering and Sacrifice for us, bearing our Sins upon the Cross, and reconciling us to God, who for his sake imputeth not to us our Trespases. From which and many more Passages, to be urg'd hereafter, nothing less can be reasonably collected, and is as clear as any one Doctrine whatsoever in the Testament, that 'tis only thro' the Merits, Sufferings, and Intercession of Christ Jesus, not our own Righteousness, or Repentance alone, that we shall finally be accepted with God, obtain the Remission of our Sins, and eternal Happiness in another Life. Thus much is so obvious and palpable (o), as all Christians Antient and Modern con-

(o) Summa huc redit, quod is (Jesus) peccata generis humani in se suscepit, eaque expiavit, ac pro iisdem justitiae divinae satisfecit eo cum effectu, ut qui in ipsum credunt, & in ejusdem Merito & Satisfactione omnem suam fiduciam reponunt, peccatorum remissionem, cum alijs beneficiis, quae cum Deo reconciliatos comitantur, & demum vitam aeternam consequantur. Quam in rem luculentissima in divinis literis testimonia extant. — Ubi non opus est, ut inquiramus, an non Deus aliud remedium servandis Hominibus lapsis investigare potuerit; sed sufficit, quod non alia via aut alio modo eos salvare voluerit. Cl. Pufendorf. Jus sociale divinum. p. 179, 171.

fess but a few *Socinians*, that we cannot avoid understanding it, without flying to such extravagant Glosses, and unnatural distortions of words, as if once allow'd would obscure and evade the plainest *moral* Sentence that can be written. And give me but the same liberty of Interpretation, which some have taken as to these parts of Scripture, I will engage myself to render the plainest System of *natural* Religion, that you can draw up for our Use, ambiguous and intricate. But if the Scripture, as it certainly is, be clear in this *general* Doctrine, how are we at liberty to reject it from being any *constituent part* of Christianity, because perhaps it does not teach *so clearly*, why this *Atonement* by Christ was *necessary*, and *how* his Sacrifice became so efficacious in the Sight of God, as to procure his Pardon and eternal Salvation to Sinners? We may, I think, rest contented with knowing positively the *Terms* of our *Acceptance* with God from his *inspir'd* Ministers, without insisting on a full Declaration from Him, *why* these and no other are the Terms. And strange *Christians* should we prove indeed, if we slight that eminent Doctrine concerning *Christ* our *Redeemer*, upon which as much Emphasis

is

is laid throughout the *Testament*, as upon any one Doctrine in it. CHAP. V.

I NEED not descend after these to other Points of *Revelation*, which, I suppose, are judg'd less *obscure*, and less subject to dispute. It is now time to obviate another Exception of yours on this Head. You say, "That Men of different Reach, Capacity, and Talents, must needs think differently or understand the same verbal Propositions in different Senses; that is, they must believe different Doctrines concerning the same thing. But is it not strange, that God should reveal a Religion as of any *Necessity* and *Use* to Mankind, which may be taken in as many different Senses, as there are different Capacities, Apprehensions, and Ways of Thinking among Men. This surely could not in any Propriety of Speech be call'd a *Religion*, but must be a vast Number of Religions, perhaps almost as many as there are Men. A pretty Quirk indeed, *Philaetbes*, founded entirely on Quibble or Falshood, and ending, if really of any force, in the Ruin of your *Natural Religion*! For these different Senses and different Doctrines about the same thing amount in reality to no more than

CHAP. than this, that Men of *different Reach &c.*

V. *may think something differently on the same verbal Proposition, that is, differently in point of Extent and Accuracy, but yet agreeing at the same time in one general Subject or Truth.* They may not all see for instance, the Doctrine of Christ's *Incar-nation, Mediation, Satisfaction, Trinity* and the like, in the *same Degree of Light, or Justness of Proportions exactly.* The Ideas of some concerning these Points may be perhaps more *clear and distinct*, their Conceptions more *large and correct*, than those of others. But still they may *all discern the true Doctrine of Scripture* in a *great degree*, either by themselves or the Assistance of others. They may first easily perceive, what is *not* the Sense of Scripture upon these Heads, and so may easily avoid what is *contrary or repugnant* to it. And secondly by due Attention, they may form a *general Idea of the Truth which is really taught by it*, and so far, in Points of Importance, it is *necessary* for them to believe and practise. And if this be all, as it should be, that is meant by your *different Senses*, it proves as much against *Natural Religion as Revealed*, and nothing at all against either.

For

For these different *Capacities, Apprehensions* CHAP. V.
 &c. in Men continue the same, whichever of these two be their Religion. And must not therefore such Men of different *Capacities and Apprehensions*, understand the several Articles even of Natural Religion in such *different Senses*? Let us first know, *Philaethes*, where lies your *infallible Rule* of this Religion of *Nature*? And in the next place, how this Rule is *infallibly applied* by every single Man who is to be govern'd by it? And in the third place, how all Mankind, of such *various Talents and Abilities*, can understand it precisely in the same Sense? Take the Nature and Attributes of God, and his Providence, the very *Fundamentals* of your Deistical System, and we shall find the Notions about them, if Men are left to form them by *themselves* as in the other Case, to be *perhaps as many as there are Men*. The very word itself God, and every Proposition concerning the *Eternity, Omnipresence, Spirituality, Omniscience, Justice, and Goodness* of God, nay and every *moral Precept* relating to God or Men, would of course be understood by Men of *different Capacities in Senses differing* very much from one another. For how

CHAP. Now should it be otherwise, unless all Orders of Men from the highest to the lowest were equal *Metaphysicians* and *Casuits* exactly? Now if so, then your *Religion of Nature*, by the reasoning above, could not be call'd in any *Propriety of Speech* a Religion, but a vast Number of Religions. And an Atheist might ask, as you do, "is it not strange that God should reveal by Reason a Religion to Mankind as of any necessity and use, which may be taken in as many different Senses, as there are different Apprehensions, and Ways of Thinking among Men? Now the Answer which you give to the *Atheist* in defense of *Natural*, will easily by a small change of Words be applied in defense of *Reveal'd* Religion. The Truth is, all must understand so much of the written Laws and Instructions of Christ's Apostles, as they are able, and believe and obey so much as they do understand; and all by Care and Application will understand the most essential Articles (tho' in different Degrees, yet) sufficiently for the Use and Security of each particular Person. By the help of which one Observation, we may judge very well of the use and necessity of this Religion to Mankind. First

of

of the *Use*. It must be granted, that as there **CHAP.**
subsist in Fact such different *Capacities and* **V.**
Apprehensions in Men, the use of *Reveal'd*
Religion (or Natural) will not be so great
and *extensive*, as if the *Capacities* of all
Men were precisely *equal* in the highest
degree of Brightness, of which our Nature
is capable. But to argue from hence, that
it could be of *no use* at all, is mere Folly
and Reverie. Because thousands of Men
there are in every Age, endued with near
equal Capacities of the highest Class, and
equally perhaps *improv'd* by a proper Cultiva-
tion, which might easily understand with
like exactness all the principal Articles of
that Religion. And Men of these Capaci-
ties may assist by Instruction those of lower
Capacities, who even by themselves may
with Attention understand the same Doc-
trines in a *good* Degree, and still more
clearly and perfectly with the help of Teach-
ers. So that *Reveal'd* Religion as well as
Natural, understood and explain'd in this
manner, is sure to be of eminent *Use* to
Mankind, to produce many happy Effects,
and to answer in a proper measure the wise
Ends of Almighty God in communicating
one or the other.

NEXT

CHAP.

V.

NEXT for the *Necessity* of this reveal'd Religion (or natural;) by which is meant I suppose, a *Necessity* in point of *Duty* upon Men, as affecting their spiritual Interest or eternal Salvation. Now thus much is certain from the different Capacities and Apprehensions of Men, and the different *Senses* abovemention'd, in which they may understand the same *verbal Propositions*, that the same *Degrees* of Knowledge, and the same *Quantity* of Faith is not *necessary* alike to the Salvation of *all* Men. This we do not presume to affirm, because, no doubt, to *whom much is given, of him shall much be requir'd*; and to whom little is given, of him will be requir'd as little. According to the various Apprehensions, Opportunities, and Circumstances of different Men, the Number and Kind of *Necessaries* (*p*) will vary of Course; and therefore as no certain Estimate can be made of the one, we determine no one certain and fix'd Rule for the other. We do not pretend to pronounce, *how much* eve-

(p) See *Stillingsf.* Rational Account. P. I. CH. II. p. 50, 52. &c. Fol.

Sherlock. Vindicat. of Defense. &c. p. 311. &c.

Dr. Waterland. Discourse of Fundamentals. p. 10, 11, 12.

ty particular Person is oblig'd under pain CHAP.
of Damnation to understand and believe, of V.
the weightiest Points, as the *Trinity, Incar-*
nation, Satisfaction of Christ &c. That we
leave to the Righteous Judge of all Men,
to determine hereafter. But setting these a-
side, there is one plain Rule to the Consci-
ences of all, by which every Man in reason
is oblig'd to conduct himself, which is, to
study the *Oracles of God* with all the dili-
gence he is able, and to receive and obey
what he *knows himself* to be truly his Will,
or the Doctrine of *Christ* and his *Apostles*.
Not to treat those Points, as no *parts* or no
material ones of *Christianity*, which he *sees*
are clearly express'd, and strongly inculcat-
ed in the Holy Scripture, only because some
Persons either do not or will not discern so
much of them as himself. This would be
as *wise* and *pious* in a Christian, as it would
be in a *Deist*, who was fully perswaded of
the *Providence* of God, to make that however
no *constituent* Part of his *natural* Religion,
because perhaps some freethinking *Philoso-*
pher could believe nothing of it. Now as
you, *Philaletbes*, would not presently strike
out of your *Religion of Nature*, what you
and the generality of Philosophers see plain-
ly

CHAP. ly to be *Essentials* and *Fundamentals* of that,
 V. only because a few Gentlemen might pre-
 tend those Articles to be very *obscure* and
doubtful; so neither are *Christians* to strike
 out those Doctrines from their *reveal'd* Re-
 ligion, which they and the generality of
Christians antient and modern see plainly to
 be taught by the latter, and to be likewise
 important *Fundamentals* (q) of it, only be-
 cause

(q) Here it is proper to be observ'd, that *Fundamentals* or
Essentials of *Christianity*, are by no means the *same* with *Ne-
 cessaries* of *Salvation*, and should not be confounded with them,
 as our *Moral Philosopher* and others are apt to do frequently.
 The former (or *Fundamentals*) refer to the *System* or *Fabrick* of
Christianity, in a View quite *abstracted*, and mean those Ar-
 ticles, which are *essential* to the very *Frame* and *Subsistence*
 of *Christianity* as *such*, without which the very *Form*, which
distinguishes that from all other Religions is destroy'd; and
 the *Essence* of it is obliterated. The Belief of which is there-
 fore as necessary to the Being of *Christianity*, as the Belief of
 the *First Principles* of any *Art* or *Science* is to the latter. And
 these *Fundamentals* in such an *abstracted* View, are of a fix'd
 and *determin'd* Nature, the *Scripture* once suppos'd and laid be-
 fore us; and may be *ascertain'd* by plain and unalterable
 Rules. But *Necessaries* of *Salvation* referring to *Persons* are
 quite other things, being capable of no fix'd Rule or Measure;
 because of the *different* Capacities, Opportunities, and Cir-
 cumstances of particular Men. What is *necessary* to the Sal-
 vation of one, may not be so to that of another, for the Rea-
 sons now mention'd: And numberless being the *Disparities*
 of Persons in the respects just hinted, numberless may like-
 wise be the *Disparities* of *Necessaries* for them. On which

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cause some paradoxical *Christian-Deists* will CHAP.
needs persuade them, that the Scriptures V
are quite unintelligible in all these Points.
For what is this but telling us in other
words, that if others are blind to the Scrip-
ture, we must own ourselves presently as
blind as they? And where will this end?
Another may assure us, like *Christianity as
Old &c.* that the *moral* Parts of Scripture
are equally *ambiguous*, and not to be under-
stood in any one determinate Sense. And
then I suppose, we must give up *them* too,
being *liable to different Constructions*, as of
no necessity by the *Christian Scheme*. Such
a dark, incomprehensible thing would *Chris-
tianity* soon be made by such Reformers,

Account we do not pretend to fix the Number or Nature of
these, nor *absolutely* to pronounce *Damnation* on Persons, er-
ring even in the most important *Fundamentals*. Only this
must be remember'd, that we cannot *promise Salvation* on
the Authority of Scripture to any others, but those only
who believe sincerely the *Christian Religion*, and observe the
Fundamentals or *Essentials* of it, when proposed to their Un-
derstandings and Assent. And we are likewise oblig'd in
Duty to *disown* those Persons for *Christian Brethren*, and to
exclude them from *Catholic Communion*, who openly oppose
or renounce either. See *Cbillingworth*. Ch. iii. p. 95, 96,
&c. 115. Ch. iv. p. 143, &c. Ed. 9. *Alphons. Turretin*.
De Artic. Fundam. Cap. i, v, vi. Dr. *Waterland*. Impor-
tance &c. Ch. iv.

CHAP. But believe me, *Philaetbes*, Men of Sense
 V. and Learning are not to be stagger'd and bewilder'd at this time of Day, with such Sceptical Pretences and Artifices; they will never be perswaded, whatever you say to the contrary, that the original *Language* of our Books is not to be well understood, when to their own Knowledge they *can* and *do* understand it; nor that true *Christianity* depends very little upon the *Sense* and *Construction* of *antient* Authors, when they are sure, that it *wholly* depends upon it; nor that Things or Doctrines are *obscure* in a Text, which their own *Eyes* and *Understandings* convince them are *clearly* taught by it; nor that *Criticks* and *Grammarians* are useless Triflers in *Divinity*, because some *Schemists* wish them out of their way. All this, I say, will never be swallow'd implicitly, *assert* it as often and as loudly as you please, so long as any *Logic* and *Books* remain amongst us; which, I hope, we are in no great danger of losing, whatever may become of some *Power* and *Revenues*, which give you so much Disturbance.

HOWEVER, it seems, to prove our Scriptures unintelligible in *Fact*, in all Points of pure *Revelation*, and from thence how

un-essential and un-fundamental such Points CHAP.

V.

must be to Christianity; you appeal to the perpetual Disagreements and Divisions of Christians about them. You tell us, that

“the Christians themselves could never agree about the Sense of their own Revelation, but have run into as many different and contrary Parties and Schemes upon it, as Men of the most distant and opposite Religions in the World; and this too, with respect to the most important and concerning Doctrines of Revelation; what one Sect or Party determines as the true and only Sense of the Revelation, another rejects as containing no Sense at all; what one maintains as Fundamental, necessary and essential to Christianity, another explodes and condemns, as false, dangerous, and heretical. Accordingly the Protestants themselves have been continually wrangling, dividing, and subdividing, excommunicating and damning one another, even about the Essentials and Fundamentals of Christianity. And from hence they have demonstrated to the whole World, that they are so far from having an infallible Rule, that they have in effect, no certain determinate or intelli-

CHAP. *gible Rule at all. p. 16, 403. & pass.* In
 V. good truth it is a lamentable Case, and has
 often been the Subject of the like tragical
 Complaints among our good *Christian-Deists*, such as *Collins (r)*, *Tindal (s)* &c.
 But when we come to examine it to the
 bottom, it proves really not one tittle against
 our Rule of Faith, and falls as heavy on
 your *Natural Religion as Reveal'd*. *Chri-*
stians, it is true, have disagreed concerning
the most important Doctrines of Revelation,
 but they have chiefly disagreed upon the *Mo-*
*du*s or *Circumstances* of those Doctrines, not
 as to their *general Truth* or *Scriptural Au-*
thority. They are *most* of them agreed in
 believing every Point of those abovemention'd,
 as taught very plainly by our Lord
 or his Apostles; and they likewise under-
 stand them *nearly* in the same Sense, so far
 as the *general Truth* is concern'd. They
 acknowledge Christ Jesus as their *Saviour*
 and *Redeemer* in the *proper* Sense, *i. e.* as
 procuring the Remission of our Sins and
 eternal Happiness hereafter, by virtue of
 his own Merits and Sufferings, and not sole-

(r) *Discourse of Freethinking. p. 45. &c.*

(s) *Christianity as old &c. Ch. 13.*

Conf. *Spinoza, Philosoph. Script. Interp. c. xi. &c.*

ly by the excellence of his *Instructions* and CHAP.
Example: tho' at the same time they may V.
differ in explaining the Grounds, Method, 
and Extent of his *Satisfaction*, because these
Particulars are not express'd by that Scrip-
ture, which teaches the other. So again,
they believe (I speak of the generality) the
true *Divinity* of the Son and Holy Spirit,
as clearly taught by the same Scripture, tho'
not agreeing or understanding *how* both co-
exist with the Father as *one* God, united
without Confusion, and distinct without
Division. In the same manner do they both
concur and *dissent* in the other important
Doctrines; and hence it was, that Baron
Pufendorf (t) form'd his Scheme of uniting
all the *Protestant* Churches, on the general
Profession of these and some other Points;
and Mr. *Le Clerc* (u) represented them at
large, as certain Evangelical Doctrines, and
the confess'd Principles of Christians. Now,
I would ask, how all the *Protestant*
Churches from the great *Reformation* to
this Day, however divided and differenc'd
in other respects, should *agree*, as they do,

(t) *Pufendorf*. Jus Fecial. Elvin. p. 137 — 210.

(u) *Joan. Cler.* Prolegom. Hist. Eccl. Sect. III. s.
i. and iii.

CHAP. in discerning these Doctrines to be the
 V. Doctrines of Scripture, if our Rule of
 Faith had been so *obscure* and *ambiguous*
 as you represent it, so unintelligible
 in any one *determinate Sense* as to these
 Points? How comes it to pass, that the
 greatest *Remonstrants* in *Holland*, such as
Episcopius, Limborch, Le Clerc &c. should
 likewise profess *their* Belief of the same
 things, and as the *clear* Doctrine of Scrip-
 ture? How should it happen also, that all
 the most *antient* Churches in Christendom,
 should, as they certainly did, concur in the
 same Faith? Surely this *Testament* of ours
 is the strangest Book, that ever was wrote,
 to be perfectly *obscure* and *ambiguous* in such
 important Articles, and yet to appear so
plain and *easy* in the same to so many thou-
 sands of Men *antient* and *modern*. Indeed
 some there have been, and are in these
 Days (tho' but a handful of Men in compari-
 son) who have denied the *whole Truth* of
 these Doctrines, as having no Foundation in
 Scripture. But whoever considers atten-
 tively the wretched Shifts and Artifices, the
 harsh Constructions, and forc'd Interpretati-
 ons, by which these Men would exclude
 and evade the Doctrines above, will easily

per-

perceive, that they did not find the Scrip- CHAP.
tures obscure concerning them, but make V.
it so themselves by dint of Invention and
Subtlety; and that no words whatsoever
could be plain enough for such Expositors,
but might be wrested and tortur'd by the
same Arts, from their obvious and genuine
Sense (w). In which respect it is with Scrip-
ture, as with all other Books of Laws, lia-
ble to be puzzled and perverted in the plain-
est Things by human Wit, and would be
so, whatever phrases had been us'd in it.
And to shew, that we are not to wonder,
or be stagger'd at all by such Pretences, we
see, how confidently the *Romanists* will erect
their *Papacy* on the *Scriptures*, which I sup-
pose, are to *Protestants* plain and express e-
nough against them. And we have seen,
how many *Entbusiasts* or *Libertines*, *antient*
and *modern*, can evade the *Morality* of the
same *Scriptures*, as well as others the Ar-
ticles of *Faith*. Not to mention the old *Car-*
pocratians, it is well known there was
once of later Date a numerous Sect both a-
broad and at home, who could discern there

(w) Instances will be given hereafter of this kind, when
I come to vindicate some Doctrines professedly, which our
Moral Philosopher has labour'd to invalidate.

CHAP. no obligations to *Moral Righteousness* in
 W. true Believers, being assur'd of their Accep-
 tance with God and eternal Salvation, from
 a bare *Faith* in the Merits of Christ, with-
 out any Necessity of good Works. Are
 we therefore to conclude from the wild im-
 pure Reveries of these *Antinomians*, that
Morality is not a *Fundamental* of the *Chris-
 tian* Religion? Or are we presently to sup-
 pose, that the *Testament* is *obscure*, and not
 capable of being *understood* in any *determi-
 nate Sense*, as to these Points? I believe,
 there are few so hardy as to draw such Con-
 sequences from any *Disagreements* among
 Christians of *this* kind; and why then must
 we lay any stress upon mere *Disagreements*
 in other Points? The truth is, these too as
 well as the other may arise, not from any
 Defect or Darkeness in the *sacred Oracles*,
 but from *Human Weaknesses* or *Corrupti-
 ons* innumerable. And were they even as
clear and *perfect* in the delivery of all Essen-
 tials, as *divine Wisdom* itself could *possibly*
 make them, such differences and Dissensi-
 ons would not be prevented, while Men
 continue to be Men; that is, while Care-
 lessness and Ignorance, Prejudices and Pas-
 sions, Conceit and Interests, have any influ-
 ence

ence on the Judgments of Mankind. There-
fore did Mr. Le Clerc very justly observe,
that "To all sincere Persons, who love the
" Truth preferably to every other Thing,
" the Gospel is as *clear* as the Sun, and can-
" not occasion any considerable dispute: But
" to Men govern'd by their Passions, and
" conceited of their Prejudices, the most e-
" *vident* Things in the World are *obscure*.
" There is no Law so clear, but a Wrangler
" may raise a Thousand difficulties about it;
" And if a Legislator should not pass for a
" wise Man, except he expressly prevented
" all possible Difficulties, and mark'd all
" the Cases, wherein ill-dispos'd Persons
" would abuse his Laws, there had never
" been any Legislator, to whom any Wisdom
" could be attributed. — Therefore if
" God had design'd to prevent all these Con-
" troverties already mov'd, or that shall here-
" after arise about the Sense of his Revelati-
" on, he must have made so great a Num-
" ber of Volumes, that, to use St. John's
" expression, *the World could not contain them*,
" and their *Multitude* itself would render
" them useless (*). Now if so, what Trif-
ling and Chicanery is it to make those dis-

(*) *Le Clerc Causes of Incredulity.* p. 171, 172.

CHAP. puts an argument *against* the *Perspicuity* of
 V. Scripture in Fundamental Points, which
 might arise even *supposing* the *Perspicuity* of
 it to be the greatest imaginable? As to what
 you urge, that the "most *Impartial, Honest,*
 " *Careful, and diligent* Enquirers, are not a-
 ble to agree in those Matters; if you mean
 an Agreement in mere *circumstantial*s of
 those Doctrines, *undetermin'd* by Scripture,
 it may be so, because in them they have no
 certain Rule or Guide to follow; but if you
 mean in the very *Substantial*s and *general*
Truth of the same, I may take the Liberty
 to affirm, that is more, than you can know
 or prove, unless you attended every step of
 their Enquiries, and were perfectly acquaint-
 ed with their Hearts, Heads, and Disposi-
 tions, which I see no reason for us to admit.
 Another may plead with as good Authority,
 the *Honesty, Diligence, and Impartiality* of
 those Enquirers, who denied the *Necessity*
 or *Importance* of *Moral Righteousness* by the
 Terms of the Gospel; but I suppose, that
 Plea would have very little Weight with
 yourself. Why must we therefore regard
 the like in the present Case?

But if this sort of reasoning must needs
 be introduc'd against Religion, let it not be
 confin'd

confin'd to *Reveal'd*, but turn'd likewise against *Natural*, and then perhaps we may be less dispos'd to admire it. Now were you to press the Certainty and Obligation of that Religion upon a Sceptical Libertine, he might presently declaim against it in just the same Strain, that you do against the *Christian*. "Pray tell me, *Philaethes*, what "is your Natural Religion, and how am "I certainly to find it out? *Human Reason*, it seems, is the Book from whence we are "to learn it, but that is such a mere *Nose of Wax*, so variable with the different "Apprehensions and Talents of different Men, "and so fallible perpetually, that in effect "it is no Rule or Guide at all. And your "Natural Religion, deriv'd from and dependent upon it, has prov'd accordingly "in Fact, Men, who have had this Rule "before them for their Guide and Instructor, have never been able to understand "it in one determinate Sense, nor could ever "agree about it. They have run into as "many different Schemes and Parties upon "this Religion of yours, as Men of the "most distant and opposite Religions in the "World; and this too, with respect to the "most important and concerning Doctrines "belong-

CHAP. V. belonging to it; what one Sect determin'd
 as the true and only Sense of this Religion, another rejects as containing no
 Sense at all; what one maintains as fundamental and necessary, another explodes as
 false and dangerous; and this is not barely a Confusion and Uncertainty occasion'd
 by the Lusts, Passions, and Prejudices of Men; but we see, the most *learned, impartial, and diligent Inquirers*, after all
 their Pains and Researches, have never come to an Agreement about the most
 important Points. Witness the endless Disputes among *Philosophers* about them,
antient and modern, witness the numberless *Forms and Systems* of this Religion
 in the several Quarters of the World at this Day, in relation to the Nature and
 Attributes of God, a divine *Providence*, the Worship to be paid to the Deity, the
 Foundation, Obligation and Extent of what you call *Moral Duties*, and especially concerning the Immortality of the
 Soul, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, which are the great Supports and Cement of this Religious Fabric. Now that such in fact are the
 diversities of Opinions concerning these Points,

"Points the common Histories of the CHAP.
"learned World sufficiently inform us. V.
"And you need but look into *Sextus*
"Empiricus of the *Antients*, and the
"learned *Crouzaz* (y) of the *Moderns*,
"to be convinc'd of it. Now in this
"State of Things, let me ask how this can
"be call'd a *Religion*, which may be taken
"in as many different Senses, as there are
"different Capacities and Ways of Think-
"ing among Men. and about which it is
"hardly possible perhaps for any two inqui-
"sitive Men to form the same Notion and
"Judgment. It is plain therefore, that
"none of these *Doctrines* can be at all fun-
"damental and necessary, because Mistakes
"in such a Case are easily made, and may
"be unavoidable. Now what would you
"think, *Philaethes*, of this sort of Rant a-
"gainst *Natural Religion*? Or whatever you
"would think, what Impression would it
"make on any Man of Sense, against either
"the Certainty or Authority of it? It shews
"indeed effectually, how absolutely false and
"groundless that Assertion of yours is, that
"the *Religion* of Nature must for ever be
"alike apprehended, by the Understandings

(y) *Crouzaz*. Examen du Pyrrhonisme. 1733. Fol.

" of

CHAP. V. of *all* Mankind, and be *always* and *every* *where* the same. p. 94, 393. But it would not affect the Being and Foundation of that Religion, nor unsettle in the least any wise Man's Opinion or Assurance of it. For what true *Philosopher* would immediately see no Evidence in *Nature* for a Supreme intelligent Being, because a *Bruno* or *Spinoza* denied it? Or no Providence of God over *Human* Affairs, because forsooth an *Epicurus* rejected it? Or no Distinctions of *Moral Good* and *Evil* from a *Cumberland* or *Pufendorf*, because a *Hobbes* or *Protagoras* could discern none? What ridiculous weakness or madness would this be, to be *toft about with every wind* of Doctrine, from those who lye in wait to deceive, without considering *real Truth*, or weighing the *Natures* of *Things*? But now if such differences and disputes among Men are no Objection to the Religion of *Nature*, nor bring any Doubtfulness or Obscurity upon its controverted Articles of the greatest Importance; neither ought those of *Reveal'd* to be charg'd with Obscurity or Uncertainty, or esteem'd of no Use and Authority on that account. The only proper Enquiry is, what is *True* in itself and Scripture-Doctrine in *Fact*, not what

all

all Men agree to be either the one or the other: We may waver and hesitate, wander and Query without End, not only in Religion, but in *Philosophy, Physic &c.* and in every part of Learning, if the latter be taken for the Rule of our Judgments and Practise; for tho' all Men should agree to Day in some important Doctrine, and by that agreement determine it to be *clear and certain*, yet to morrow or a little time after, some sceptical Disputants may start new Doubts and Controversies about it, and then we are lost and bewilder'd again, and the Doctrine must become *obscure and unintelligible*. So that 'tis vain and fruitless to make this a Test of Truth or Plainness in Doctrines of any kind; but especially in *Christians* it is both absurd and inexcusable, when the Scriptures themselves forewarn them sufficiently, that *Heresies must arise* among them, *that they who are approv'd may be made manifest* (2); for which reason are they commanded to *prove all things, to hold fast the Form of sound words, to mark those who cause divisions, and to continue steadfast and immoveable in the things they have learnt and are assur'd of, know-*

(2) 1 Cor. XI. 19.

CHAP. *ing of whom they have learnt them (a). A*

VI. Lesson from the great Apostle, which both
supposes a sufficient Perspicuity in the form
of sound words, and teaches us how to think
and act upon any attempts to darken, evade,
and subvert it! All therefore who are his
Disciples sincerely, and thro' Him the Dis-
ciples of Jesus Christ, will remember these
Words, and adhere immoveably to his
Gospel.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein is examin'd briefly, and defended
from various Cavils, and gross Misrepre-
sentations, the Character of Jesus Christ,
as the true Messiah of the antient Pro-
phets.

WE are now come, *Philaetbes*, to
 that which may be call'd the *Bur-*
den of your Discourse, and appears at every
Turn the grand Object of your Spleen and
Investive, that is, the Jewish Christianity,
and of this you produce one extraordinary

(a) *Rom. XVI. 17. 2 Theff. V. 21. 1 Tim. I. 13.*
 III. 14.

Article, which may serve for a *Specimen* of CHAP.
the whole, and a warning sufficient to us VI.
against too easy an admittance of your
Scheme. By your account then, it seems, 
the *Christians* of this and all past Ages, have
lain under a gross Delusion, in setting up
their *Lawgiver Jesus*, as the true *Messiah*
of the antient *Jewish Prophets*, which you
assure us, is vain unwarrantable *Judaism*,
utterly irreconcilable with the Prophets
themselves, and even with the avow'd De-
signs and Doctrine of *Jesus* himself. And,
if you might advise, we ought hencefor-
ward to renounce this Article entirely, and
not suffer our excellent Master to bear the
Disgrace of such a *Character*. And upon these
Declarations from one, that calls himself a
Christian, great, no doubt, will be the Tri-
umph of the *Jews* among us, who at least
should return you their publick Thanks,
for your eminent Service to their Cause
against their *Christian* Adversaries. You
here at once very fairly decide in their Fa-
vour the Dispute so long subsisting con-
cerning the *Messiah*, and honour them with
a Victory, which they never could gain be-
fore by all their *Nizzachons* and *Chizzuk*

H h

Emu-

CHAP. *Emunas* (b), not even the subtle *Orobio* with
 VI. all his Acumen and Plausibility. However
 tho' You, notwithstanding your mortal An-
 tipathy to *Judaism*, can thus far symbolize
 with our *Jewish Enemies*, I believe few
Christians will follow you in it, that know
 why they are so, and ever consider'd atten-
 tively either *Prophets* or *Gospel*. The Rea-
 sons indeed, which you alledge for such Do-
 ctrines, would if true be convincing enough,
 but they happen to be all fallacious and
 frivolous. The first is, "That the Pro-
 phetical Messiah was exactly the Messiah
 which the Jews expected in the Days of
 Jesus, that is, He was to be a National
 Saviour or Deliverer of the Jews, a Tem-
 poral Prince, and a Restorer of the King-
 dom to that People and the House of Da-
 vid in particular: All which, together
 with his making *Jerusalem* the Seat of his
 Kingdom, "was, you say, an essential Cha-
 racter with all the *Prophets*, who said any
 thing of the matter; and they all suppos'd
 likewise, that his future Kingdom would
 be brought about by *Conquest* or the Pow-
 er of the Sword, and by a Prince of the

(b) Titles of Books written against the Christians, chiefly
 on this Subject: See above p. 364, 365.

"Lineage of *David*, who was to subdue
 "all Nations, and bring the *Gentiles* into a
 "peaceable Submission and Obedience to
 "his Government. And you will venture
 "to say, that none of our Christian Jews
 "will ever be able to prove the contrary.
 p. 328, 329, 335. The second is, "That
 "our Saviour *Jesus Christ* never made the
 "least Claim or Pretensions to this Prophe-
 "tick Jewish Character, nor once appeals
 "to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, that He was
 "the Person who was to restore the King-
 "dom to the House of *David*, or the Mes-
 "siah in the plain obvious Sense of all the
 "Prophets; so far from it, that he re-
 "nounc'd this Character, and died upon
 "that Renunciation, declaring before Pi-
 "late, that his *Kingdom was not of this*
 "*World*. p. 325, 329, 331. And "thus
 "much you offer to the Consideration of
 "such learned Men among us, who may
 "think that they are, or ever shall be able
 "to convince the *Jews* upon Jewish Prin-
 "ciples, which for your part you pronounce
 "an *impossible thing*. p. 329, 359. To con-
 "firm all which, you assert 3d. "That 'twas
 "only the *Jewish* Apostles and Disciples,
 "that preach'd up *Jesus* as the great Mes-

CHAP. "fiab of the Prophets; who accordingly

VI. "believ'd in Christ only as their Natio-

nal Restorer and Deliverer, not as the

"common Saviour of the World, by a new

"Law of his own independent of the Law

"of Moses; and therefore they excluded the

"whole Gentile World from all the Be-

"nefits of his Kingdom. Upon this vain

"hope, you assure us, they all along ad-

"her'd to him, and never, even after his

"Resurrection, preach'd Jesus as the Mes-

"fiab in any other Sense. Nor did any

"Christian Jew receive him as the Messiah

"under any other notion. For which Rea-

"son all expected, he would soon come

"again with a sufficient Power from Hea-

"ven, to destroy the Roman Empire, to

"restore the Nation, and to set up his

"Kingdom at Jerusalem. It was only St.

"Paul, that taught Christ as the Author

"of a new Spiritual Kingdom, and as the

"common Saviour of the World, without

"regarding the Sense of the Prophets in the

"Case. This you repeat over and over p.

328, 329, 349, 354, 361, 367, 368, 375,

378. Such is the Sum of your mighty

Arguments on this Head, each of which

I shall take in their order separately, wav-

ing

ing only the last for the present to avoid CHAP.
 prolixity. First then, let us examine the VI
Prophetical Characters of the Messiah. Now
 it must not be expected, that in answer to
 a bare *Affertion* of yours, unsupported by
 any positive Proof, we should enter im-
 mediately into a full discussion of *all* the
 Passages in the *Prophets* to this purpose,
 since that Undertaking is properly incum-
 bent first upon you, who engage to over-
 throw the *receiv'd* Exposition and Appli-
 cation of those Writers. It will therefore
 be sufficient for me to shew by some brief
 Observations upon them, how little *Neces-*
sity and *Authority* their appears for your
 Hypothesis, even according to the *obvious*
 Sense of the *Prophets*. To begin with that
 Character of the *Messiah*, by which you re-
 present him as the *National Deliverer* or
 Saviour of the *Jews* only, not the common
 Saviour of the World. Hear how differ-
 rently God speaks of that Person by the
 Prophet *Isaiab* in the following Words,
Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine
Elect in whom my Soul delighteth: I have
put my Spirit upon him, He shall bring forth
Judgment to the Gentiles — He shall not
fail, nor be discourag'd, till he have set judg-

CHAP. VI. *ment in the Earth: and the Isles (i.e. the western Parts of the World) shall wait for his Law. — I will keep thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light to the Gentiles, to open the blind Eyes &c. Sing unto the Lord a New Song, and his Praise from the End of the Earth — The Isles and the Inhabitants thereof. Let the Wilderness and the Cities thereof lift up their Voice, the Villages that Kedar doth inhabit; Let the Inhabitants of the Rock sing, let them shout from the Top of the Mountains. Let them give Glory to the Lord, and declare his Name in the Islands. — I will bring the Blind by a Way they knew not, I will lead them in Paths they have not known; I will make Darkness Light before them, and Crooked things Strait. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in Graven Images &c. (c) Again. It is a light thing, that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserv'd*

(c) *Isaiab. XLII. 1, 4, 6, 7, &c.*

The old Chaldee Paraphrast Jonathan, begins the Chapter thus. *Behold my Servant the Messiah* דָּא עֲבָדִי

מְשִׁיחָא

(d) A
(e) A
(f) I
(g) I
by the C
(b) H

of Israel; I will also give thee for a Light to CHAP
the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my Salvation VI.
to the End of the Earth (d). A passage ap-
plied by St. Paul himself to our Lord as the
Messiah, when he turn'd to the Gentiles, up-
on being rejected by the Jews (e); and ma-
nifestly alluded to by old Simeon, when em-
bracing the Child Jesus, he cried out with
that Rapture, Lord — mine Eyes have seen
thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before
all people, to be a Light to Lighten the Gen-
tiles, and to be the Glory of thy people Israel (f).
Again farther. There shall be a Root of Jesse,
which shall stand for an Ensign of the Peo-
ple; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest
shall be glorious. And the Earth shall be full
of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters
cover the Sea (g). Agreeably to this descrip-
tion of him, he is stil'd by another Prophet,
The desire of all Nations (h), by another, He
that should speak Peace to the Heathen (i).
And in the Promise of God to Abraham it is
said expressly. In thy seed shall all Nations

(d) *Isaiab.* XLIX. 6.

(e) *Acts.* XIII. 47. *Comp.* XXVI. 17, 18.

(f) *Luke.* II. 30, 31, 32.

(g) *Isaiab.* XI. 9, 10. This Root of Jesse is interpreted
by the Chaldees Paraphrast משיח Messiah.

(h) *Haggai.* II. 7.

(i) *Zachar.* IX. 10.

CHAP. of the Earth be blessed (b); which seed St. Paul himself interprets of Christ or the Messiah, speaking thus to the Galatians, The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' Faith, preach'd before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed. — That the Blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles thro' Jesus Christ. — To Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made. He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ (i). Now are all these Descriptions of a Messiah, who was only to be a National Deliverer, and Saviour of the Jews? How then were all Nations to be blessed in Him? How comes He to be the Desire of all Nations, to speak Peace to the Heathen? How comes He not only to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, but also to be a Light to the Gentiles, and Salvation to the Ends of the Earth? Are Blessing, Peace, Light, and Salvation, to be expounded by Affliction, Hostility, a dismal Scene of Oppression or Destruction by the Sword? And can this be the plain, and obvious Sense of

(b) Gen. XXII. 18.

(i) Gal. III. 8, 14, 16.

Conf. Surenhusius. Conciliat. p. 573 — 576.

those

those prophetic Phrases above? Impossible! Therefore does an old Jewish Expounder upon Genesis, after asking this Question, *Can it be said of the Redeemer, i. e. the Messiah, that he is a respecter of Persons,* answer ingenuously, *Far from it; but all that confess him with their Heart, Mouth, and in their Works, shall be save, as it is written of him, saying, I have given thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my Salvation to the End of the Earth(k).* A just Rebuke to those arrogant Jews, who would restrain all the Blessings of the Messiah to their own People! But from the Passages abovesited, we may learn in what Sense, *The Mountain of the Lord's House (i. e. the Temple and Worship of the true God) should be establish'd in the Top of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills (i. e. above all Idols, whose Temples or Shrines were usually in the East upon Hills)*

(ה) יביר לומר שהנואל נשא פנים ידור
אלא כל המודים לו בפיהם ובמעשרם
ובלבם ישוע ומלט — ועל דכתיב אום
ותתקד לאור נים ע

Bereshith. Rabba. ap. Raimund. Pug. Fid. P. III. Diff. III. cap. 14.

and

CHAP. and all Nations should flow unto it. For out
 VI. of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word
 of the Lord from Jerusalem (l), i. e. Upon
 the Advent of the great *Messiah*. Likewise
 how the Gentiles were to come to the Light of
 Israel, and Kings to the Brightness of his Ris-
 ing (m); how the Name of the Lord of Hosts
 was to be great among the Gentiles, from the
 Rising up of the Sun to the going down of the
 same, and Incense offer'd to his Name in every
 Place (n). Hence was Egypt to know the
 Lord in that Day, and serve him with the
 Assyrians, and Israel to be third with Egypt
 and Assyria; whom the Lord of Hosts would
 bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and
 Assyria the Work of my Hands, and Israel
 my inheritance (o). And hence it is lastly,
 that in the Book of *Psalms*, occur so many
 Intimations of some future Illumination
 and Deliverance to the Heathen World, re-
 ferring undoubtedly to the glorious *Messiah*
 as the Author of it. Thus in Ps. LXVI. 4.

(l) *Isaiab.* II. 2, &c. *Micab.* IV. 1, &c.

(m) *Isaiab.* LX. 3.

(n) *Malach.* I. 11.

(o) *Isaiab.* XIX. 21, 23, 25.

See the most excellent Comment of *Vitringa* upon this
 and the other Passages of *Isaiab.*

All the Earth shall worship thee, they shall sing to thy Name. And Ps. LXVII. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy Way may be known upon Earth, thy saving Health (i. e. Salvation) among all Nations. The People shall praise thee, O Lord, even all People shall praise thee (p). The Nations shall rejoyce, and triumph, because thou shalt judge the People with Righteousness, and govern the Nations upon Earth. God shall bless us, and all the Ends of the Earth shall fear him. Thus enlarg'd was the Idea, which the Prophets had form'd of the Messiah, and so extensive in their View were the Blessings to be deriv'd from Him, not confin'd to the single Nation of the Jews (q), but communicated equally to the Gentiles, i. e. to those who would turn to the Living God, and receive his great Prophet with Humility and Reverence. Indeed we often hear in the Prophets of the Vengeance, which the Nations the Enemies of Zion and its King, should one

(p) These words are applied to the universal Redemption by the Messiah, in the *Bereschith Rabba* cited above, and the *Midrash Tillim* upon this Psalm. Ap. Raimund. Pug. Fid. p. 829. Ed. Carpzov.

(q) See *Haarnbeck. Cont. Jud. L. III. c. iv.*

CHAP. Day feel with Amazement and Horror, of
 VI. the Victory and Triumph that *Israel* should
 enjoy over his Oppressors, the Dominion
 that He should exercise over the *Heathens*,
 and the rich Affluence of Blessings to be
 shower'd down on God's People. But these
 things as might be easily shewn, relate ei-
 ther to the Times of their Deliverance from
 the *Babylonish* Captivity, and the Ruin of
 their *Assyrian* Enemies, previous to the Ad-
 vent of the *Messiah*, or to Mercies still fu-
 ture, a *Redemption* of *Judah* in the *last Days*,
 under the signal Protection of that *Christ*,
 whom they now reject, and will then ac-
 knowledge. And the *Enemies* to be then
 overthrown, and reduc'd into an absolute
 Subjection to *David* their King, are not
Gentiles as such, or those who are strangers
 to the present *Jewish* Polity, but the Ene-
 mies to the Laws, Honour, and Sovereignty
 of the true *Messiah*, and to his faithful Ser-
 vants and People, compos'd both of *Jews*
 and *Gentiles*, and united in one Body, the
 Church of Christ. All which Events, will,
 no doubt, in due Season receive their full
 Accomplishment, agreeably to the antient
 Prophecies concerning them, tho' at this
 time we have not a clear and distinct View of
 the

the Manner and Circumstances, in which the Providence of God will effect them. CHAP. VI.

I PASS on now to that other Character of the *Messiah*, which you say, was an "Essential one with all the Prophets, of his restoring the *Kingdom* to Israel, making "*Jerusalem* the Seat of it, and bringing it about by Conquest and the Power of the "Sword; by which means all Nations were "to be subdued, and brought into a peaceable Submission and Obedience to his Government. Well, admitting all this for the present, the *Jews* gain but little advantage against us, because *Jesus* may still be the true *Messiah* of the Prophets notwithstanding, so far as they know to the contrary. For this Restoration of the Kingdom &c. was not to be accomplish'd upon his *first* Appearance; it being plain, that how grand and shining soever the Images may be, in which the Prince *Messiah* is describ'd upon some Occasions, he is in others figur'd out under dismal Circumstances of Ignominy, Affliction, and Sufferings, which appear to be the Characters of his *first* Advent; and it is not till after this Tragedy is over, that his Power and Glory is to be manifested, and even the Time when this shall

CHAP. shall be visible to the Jews, is left wholly
 VI. undetermin'd by the Prophets. So that if
 the *first* Appearance of Jesus upon Earth
 answers the Prophetical Description of the
 Messiah's *first* Advent, the Jews cannot be
 sure of the negative, that is, that He *never*
 will answer the other in a *second* Appearance
 to Mankind. Therefore do but once
 convince a *Jew*, that their *Messiah* was first
 to appear in the low and sorrowful State
 abovemention'd, and the principal Difficulty
 with him is over, as the Learned have
 often experienc'd in the happy Conversion
 of many to the Christian Faith. Now
 that such are the different Representa-
 tions of this Person in the Prophets has
 so often and so fully been proved by
 learned Men, that I need but touch on
 a few remarkeable Passages to that pur-
 pose. In the 53^d Chapter of Isaiah he
 is thus describ'd. *He is despis'd and rejected*
of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted
with grief; and we hid as it were our Face
from Him; he was despis'd and we esteemed
him not. Surely he hath born our griefs, and
carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him
stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But
he was wounded for our Transgression, he was
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bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way. And the Lord laid on Him the Iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before his Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his Mouth. And he made his Grave with the Wicked and with the Rich in his Death. Yet — when thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his Days, and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hand. — By his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their Iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great, and he shall divide the Spoil with the strong, because he hath poured forth his Soul unto Death and was number'd with the Transgressors (r), and bare the Sin of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors. Now this Chapter, with the 3 last Verses of the preceeding, the Generality of the Jews themselves did antiently interpret

CHAP.
VI.
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(r) This Sentence our Saviour said " must be accomplished in him. Luke. XXII. 37.

CHAP. of the Messiah, as *Raimundus Martini* (s),

VI. Bp. *Pearson* (t) and others have shewn at large; and is prov'd so clearly by *Gussetius* and *Vitringa* (u) to be applicable only to him, that no room is left for disputing it. So likewise we read in the Prophet *Daniel*, that *Messiah the Prince* should be cut off (x), and that after *threescore and two Weeks*, expir'd many hundred years ago upon every Computation. And the same is intimated in *Pf. XXII.* beginning with that pathetic Exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* Therefore does *Zechariah* introduce the *Messiah* himself speaking thus of the latter Days, *I will pour upon the House of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications*, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (y). A passage understood

(s) *Raimund. Martin. Pug. Fid. P. III. Dist. III. cap. 16.*

(t) *Pearson. on the Creed. p. 87, 182. Note. Ed. 4. Bp. Chandler. Defense &c. p. 160, 161.*

(u) *Gusset. Confut. Chizz. Emuna. cap. XXII. Vitringa. Comment. in loc.*

(x) *Dan. IX. 26.*

(y) *Zech. XII. 10.*

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(z) See C
Bp.
Pear

of the *Messiah* by several Jews *antient* and *modern*, and to no one so suitable in all respects as to *him*(*z*). From all which laid together, it appear'd so evident that the Prophets pointed out a suffering *Messiah*, that the Jews had no other way of evading the force of their words, and supporting their high Expectations of their great Prince, than by recurring to the Fiction of a double Messiah, one victorious and triumphant by the Name of the Son of *David*, and another in a mean afflicted Condition call'd the Son of *Joseph*. A mere Invention of theirs, without any foundation in Scripture, and unknown to the Jews before our Saviour's Time. The Question then among the People about *John* the Baptist was this, whether He were the *o Xristos* The *Messiah*, one only being then expected by the *Jews*; and *John* himself enquir'd by his Messengers, whether *Jesus* was the *o ipxristos* He that was to come, without any notion of *two* such Persons. Therefore we find, that *Trypho* the Jew, with whom *Justin Martyr* had a Conference, express'd not the least Surmise

(*z*) See *Grot.* in loc.

Bp. *Chandler's* Defense &c. p. 89 — 93.

Pearson on the Creed. p. 183. Not.

CHAP. of any more than *one* Messiah, and what is
 VI. very remarkable, he grants with little Re-
 ~~~~~  
 luctance, that the Prophets did teach the  
 Afflictions and Sufferings of the great Mes-  
 siah in his *first* Advent, and that afterwards  
 his Regal Power and Majesty would appear  
 in its full Lustre. *It is prov'd indeed suffi-*  
*ciently from the Scriptures already cited by*  
*you, that the Messiah is represented by the*  
*Propbets as suffering, and to come again with*  
*Glory, invested with an Everlasting King-*  
*dom over all Nations; but now prove to us,*  
*that this (Jesus) is that Person (a). And again.*  
*Let it be, as you say (b), that the Messiah was*  
*propbesied as in a suffering Condition, and af-*  
*ter his first Advent to come with all his Glo-*  
*ry, and in the Quality of the Judge of all*  
*Men, and the Eternal King and high Priest;*  
*but now prove that Jesus is He, of whom these*  
*things were propbesied. From whence 'tis*

(a) Οπ καὶ ΠΑΘΗΤΟΣ ὁ Χρῆς διὰ τῶ γεφῶν κηρύσσεται,  
 καὶ μετὰ διξῆς πάλιν παρεξίναξ, ὁ αἰώνιον τὴν βασιλείαν πάντων  
 τῶ ἰσθῶν λήψεται ——— ἰσθῶς διὰ τῶ ἀσπαστηριμῶν ἐκὸ στο  
 γεφῶν ληψιδεῦται. ἵπν ἡ ὑτίς ἰσθ, ἀπιδεῖται ἡμῶ. *Justin.*  
*Dialog. p. 217. Ed. Thielb.*

(b) Εἶπω καὶ ταῦτα ὅπως ἔχοντα ὡς λέγει, καὶ ὅπ ΠΑΘΗΤΟΣ  
 Χρῆς ἀσπασπῶν μάλαν εἶνα, καὶ ἰνδῆσ μετὰ τὴν ΠΡΩΤΗΝ  
 αὐτῶ πικρῶν εἰλουσῶν, καὶ Κρίτης πάντων λοιπῶν, καὶ αἰώ-  
 νος βασιλεὺς, καὶ ἱερὺς γνησῶν. Εἰ οὗτος δὲδῆτ πρὸς τὸ  
 σπ ἀσπασπῶν ἀπιδεῖται. *Id. Ibid. p. 210.*

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(c) Pocock  
 Comp. P

plain, that in *Typpo's* Days the idle Story of CHAP.  
 a double *Messiah* was not yet receiv'd among VI.  
 the *Jews*, otherwise he would certainly have  
 mention'd it: and indeed *Dr. Pocock* has  
 shewn very clearly, that 'tis only from late  
 and slender Authorities, that the whole of it  
 is deriv'd to the *modern Rabbins* (c). How-  
 ever thus much is evident from it, that the  
*Jews* themselves discerned in the Prophets  
 a great Dissimilarity and Contrast in their  
 Character of the Messiah, a mixture of  
 Light and Shade, Weakness and Power,  
 Glory and Disgrace, Affliction and Tri-  
 umph, which they could not account for  
 according to their grand Ideas of that Prince;  
 And would they but open their Eyes, and  
 lay aside their Prejudices, they might per-  
 ceive that his Regal Dominion and Dignity  
 was to follow a preceding State of Humilia-  
 tion; that subsequent to his Grief and  
 Death, he was to see his Seed i. e. Disciples  
 and Servants innumerable, and to prolong  
 his Days, that the Pleasure of the Lord  
 might prosper in his Hand; that to Him  
 whom Man had despised, and to Him whom the  
 Nation had before abhorr'd, Kings should a-

(c) *Pocock*. Appendix to his Comment on *Malachi*.

Comp. *Pearson*. on the Creed. p. 183. Note.



CHAP. rise, and Princes worship, because of the Lord  
VI. that is faithful (d). So that, allowing the

❧ *Messiah* to be prophesied as a *Deliverer* and *Restorer of the Kingdom to Israel*, and to *make Jerusalem the Seat of it* &c. yet he was not to appear in that *Quality* at *first*, as the Jews of Old and at this time expect him to do; which fatal Error concerning him has often expos'd them to sad Delusions of Impostors, and feeds their vain hopes of a Saviour still to come, who is *immediately* to eclipse the *Jesus* of the Christians, and enrich his People with all Temporal Felicity.

BUT as they misinterpreted the Prophets in the Point abovemention'd, so they did as to the Nature of the *Messiah's Kingdom*, supposing it to be purely *secular* as much as *David's* or *Solomon's* of Old, erected upon the Overthrow of all other Kingdoms of the World, and flourishing in the highest Degree of Splendor under the Conduct of their Prince, residing *personally* among them in his Capital of *Jerusalem*, with a perfect Restoration of their whole *Legal Polity*, and the most Despotic Tyranny over all

(d) *Isaiab.* LIII. 10. XLIX. 7.

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(e) See Sc  
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Nations round about them (c). And such, CHAP. VI.  
*Philalætes*, you assert was this Prince and Kingdom to be, in the plain literal Sense  
 "of all the Prophets, that said any thing  
 "about it. I wish you had told us explicitly, what you mean here by the *plain literal Sense* of the Prophets, because I apprehend the greatest Difficulty lies in those words, and we may easily misunderstand one another in the use of them. If you mean by the *literal Sense*, the *Vulgar* and *primary Sense* of many words or phrases which occur upon this Subject, taken singly by themselves, and abstracted from *Metaphor*, *Symbol*, and *Allegory* &c. you may indeed out of them make a *Temporal Prince* of the great Messiah, and fix the Seat of his Kingdom in a *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, visible here upon Earth in the Land of *Palæstine*; For we often meet with the words *King*, *Jerusalem*, *Zion*, *Temple*, *Judah*, *house of Israel*, *Walls*, *Cities*, *Vineyards*, &c. the *literal Sense* of which words, consider'd abstractly and separately by themselves may intimate, what you assert. But the *literal Sense* of a few words and phrases of this kind does not

(c) See *Schickard. Jus Reg. Hebræor. p. 447. seq.*

*Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. cap. 36.*

CHAP. constitute the *true* or even *obvious* Sense of  
 VI. the *Prophets*, any more than the *literal*  
 Sense of a word or phrase, *metaphorically* us'd  
 by a *Poet*, expresses the *true* intended Sense  
 of that *Poet*; but what determines the ge-  
 nuine Sense of the *Prophets*, is the whole  
*Context* of them upon this grand Subject,  
 laid together, and so interpreted as to form  
 an uniform, and consistent Scheme upon  
 the whole. And the proper Enquiry should  
 be upon this occasion, not what a single  
 Expression, or scatter'd Sentence may *lite-*  
*rally* import, but what appears evidently  
 to be the *real* Sense of the *Prophets* in the  
 largest View of things. And in this way  
 of interpretation, we do not as some may  
 imagine, desert the *primary* Sense of those  
 Writers, and graft a *secondary* or *mystical*  
 upon that, but we establish what is truly  
 their *Primary* and most *natural* Sense, and  
 reject the *Jewish* as grounded only on a few  
 Passages of Scripture taken independently of  
 the rest, expounded according to a narrow  
 imperfect Conception of the whole prophe-  
 tic Scheme, and utterly irreconcilable with  
 many other Passages in them on the same  
 Subject.

Now



Now to shew this distinctly and accurately, thro' all the Prophecies collated together, and explain'd minutely, would it self fill a Volume. I shall therefore in this place only point out some expressions and circumstances in the Prophets, by which you may see how little ground appears for the Hypothesis above. The Jewish Notion of a Temporal Prince in the Messiah is founded on these and the like Passages if any. Jerem. XXIII. 5, 6, *Behold, the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth. In his Days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.* And this is his Name, wherewith he shall be called, the Lord (יהוה) Jehovah) our Righteousness. Ezech. XXXVIII. 23, &c. *David my Servant shall be King over them, and they shall all have one Shepherd, and my Servant David shall be their Prince for Ever.* Isaiah IX. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: and his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God (גבור) the ever-*

CHAP. last King Father (fo) the Prince of Peace Of  
 VI. the Increase of his Government and Peace  
 there shall be no End, upon the Throne of Da-  
 vid and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to  
 establish it with Judgment and with Justice,  
 from henceforth even for Ever. Dan. VII. 13.  
 I saw in the Night-Visions, and behold, one  
 like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of  
 Heaven, and came to the Antient of Days,  
 and they brought him near before him. And  
 there was given him Dominion and Glory and  
 a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and  
 Languages should serve Him; his Dominion  
 is an Everlasting Dominion, which shall not  
 pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall  
 not be destroy'd. Now can any Man but a  
 Jew imagine it necessary, to understand as  
 they do in these Sentences, a mere Human  
 Prince, frail and mortal like ourselves, and  
 ruling over the Nation of the Jews in a se-  
 cular way, upon the visible material Throne  
 of David, with his Guards and Counsellors  
 about him? Or can this Sense of the words

(f) Or the Father of the Age eternal to come, Gr. Πάτερ  
 τοῦ αἰῶνος, as the Age of the Messiah is often call'd  
 by the Jews **עולם הבא** The Age to come. See Wispi  
 Miscellan. L. ii. Dist. 6. David Mill. Præf. ad Oper.  
 Rhenferd. who vindicates Wispius against the learned  
 Rhenferd.

be

be properly arriv'd the most plain and obvious Sense of the Prophets? Certainly not, unless you fix your Eyes and Thoughts on two or three Words such as *King, Throne, David &c.* and overlook all the rest. For in the first place, the very Names or Titles of this Prince, bespeak loudly some Person far enough above the Rank of Man, and design'd to govern his People in a way much superior to that of *Human Politics*. He is stil'd *Jebovah* our *Righteousness*, and the mighty God, and if so, no doubt, a Person of Wisdom, Power, and Presence, that could rule his Subjects in a *Godlike* manner, without a *personal* Residence among them upon Earth, without visibly sitting upon his Throne at *Jerusalem*, or heading his Army like a *Joshua* or *David*. He could also govern both them and other Nations, not barely by publishing Edicts and threatening Penalties upon Offenders, like mere *Temporal* Princes, but by having the absolute disposal of all Events, and by a secret Influence on the *Hearts* and *Minds* of Men, a sort of *Rule* more noble and efficacious by many degrees than the other. Again. *Of his Government there is no end, his Kingdom was never to be destroy'd, and to be like-*



Chas. likewise universal over all People, Nations,  
 .VI. and Languages for ever. Does this sound  
 like the Kingdom of a Temporal Prince  
 upon Earth? Of a mere Man, circumscrib'd  
 in Existence to a few Years, and yet sub-  
 ducing the whole Globe by his Arms, and  
 reigning over it for ever? Surely all these  
 are inexplicable things upon that Hypothe-  
 sis; whereas take but the Christian, and  
 the whole is clear'd up at once. By that  
 the true Majesty and Dignity of this Per-  
 son is confess'd as the Lord our Righteous-  
 ness, His Throne is that of David as he is  
 descended from him, and sitting at the right  
 Hand of God rules over the same Nation  
 that He did, executing Judgment and Ju-  
 stice in the Earth by his own Righteous  
 Laws, and having all Authority and Power  
 in his own Hands, and who will one Day  
 in the time appointed manifest his Kingdom  
 as it relates particularly to the Jews (g),  
 in delivering that People from their pre-  
 sent State of Dispersion and Distress, and  
 giving them that Protection and Peace so  
 long promis'd by the Prophets; so that both  
 they and all Nations may see evident Sig-

(g) See Limborch. Amic. Collat. p. 232, 233.

Vitring. in Apocalyp. p. 848, 849.

nals of his Presence with them, and rule **CHAP.**  
 over them upon the Throne of his Father **VI.**  
*David.* Nor is this Kingdom terminated  
 as the other by the Age of Man or the Ex-  
 istence of this World, but strictly *eternal*  
 under a King immortal, and deriving such  
 degrees of *Peace* and *Felicity* hereafter to  
 the faithful Subjects of it, as alone answer  
 the lofty and pompous Expressions of the  
 Prophets, and which the other is not ca-  
 pable of administering in this Life. In con-  
 firmation of all which, it is remarkable  
 that in the Prophet *Zecbariah*, after he has  
 clearly foretold the Destruction of the *second*  
 Temple with the City of *Jerusalem*, and  
 at last prophecies of the future Restoration  
 of the Jews to the Divine Favour, and  
 the coming of the *Messiah* with all his Saints  
 or Angels, the King, by whom they are  
 deliver'd and protected, is stil'd several times  
 the *Lord of Hosts*, answering to the *mighty*  
*God* in *Isaiab*, and the *Lord our Righteousness*  
 in *Jeremiab*; which shews at once in what  
 order of Events the Deliverance of the *Jews*  
 by their *Messiah* was to happen, *viz.* Af-  
 ter a long Series of Affliction from the Ruin  
 of the *second* Temple, and likewise in what  
*manner* He was to come as their *Saviour*,  
 namely,

CHAP. VI. namely, as the *Lord of Hosts*, not as a *Human* and *Secular Prince*. And now from hence you may observe, that we do not disagree with the *Jews*, in teaching a *Kingdom* of the *Messiah*, different from that in the *real View* and *Sense* of the *Prophets*, but in teaching one different from that which they fancied from the *Prophets*. And what occasions the *Variance* is, that we form our *Notion* and *Doctrine* of it suitably to the *whole plan* of the *Prophets*, and they form *theirs* only according to some small parcels of it, uncompar'd and unconnected with the rest. Thus we see, because they found him in their propheticall *Stile*, a *King* of the *House of David*, and *sitting* upon the *Throne* or in the *Tabernacle of David*, they immediately suppos'd him a *secular Prince* entirely, without attending to the other *Descriptions* of his *Kingdom*, or remembering, that *God himself* is often stil'd the *King of Israel*, and represented as *dwelling in Sion*, *ruling in Jacob*, *sitting between the Cherubims*, and having his *Tabernacle at Salem*, and yet not esteem'd as a *Temporal Prince*. So again. Because they saw him in several *Passages* figur'd out in the *brightest Images* of *Glory*, *Power*, *Triumph*, and *Benefit*

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(b) See



Beneficence to his People, they could not bear the Thought of his low and abject State in his *first* Advent, or becoming the Objects of his just Displeasure and Severity for a Season; while they continued the Blasphemers of his Name, and rejected him like their blind Forefathers; tho' the Prophets had equally foretold both the one and the other. And thus lastly, because they read of ample Promises to *Zion* of the *Services*, *Forces*, and *Riches* of the *Gentiles*, they immediately construed these into an absolute Dominion over the Persons and Possessions of *all* *Gentiles*, restraining the *Benefits* of the Messiah's Kingdom wholly to themselves, tho', as I have mention'd before, by the tenor of the Prophecies concerning it, the believing *Gentiles* were equally to enjoy those Benefits with the *Jews*, and the *Services* and *Riches* promis'd to the latter from the former, were to arise not from a corporal *Subjection* of one to the other, but from the Amity and Union subsisting between them, as *Brethren* in the same Faith, and Fellow-Servants of the *Messiah* (b).

To all which must be added, that the words, *Jerusalem*, *Zion*, *Mountain* of the

(b) See *Fittinga*. Observ. Sac. L. V. c. 1.

CHAP. Lord &c. used often by the Prophets upon  
 VI. this occasion, are so circumstantiated evi-  
 dently, as not to bear that *literal* Sense,  
 which you urge with such Emphasis against  
 us, and prove it to be nothing less than  
 the *true* and *obvious* Sense of the Prophets.  
 Thus it is call'd a *Jerusalem* with *Isaiab*  
 and *Zechariab*, to which all *Families* of the  
 Earth should *come up every Year*, nay *every*  
*Month*, and *every Sabbath*, to worship be-  
 fore the King the Lord of Hosts. *It shall*  
*come to pass*, says one after speaking of *Je-*  
*rusalem*, *that from one new Moon to another,*  
*and from one Sabbath to another, shall all*  
*Flesh come to worship before me, saith the*  
*Lord(i).* It shall be, says the other, *that*  
*whofo will not come up of all the Families*  
*of the Earth to Jerusalem, to worship the*  
*King the Lord of Hosts, even upon them*  
*shall be no rain(k).* But how is this possi-  
 ble in the *literal* Sense, either for all *Fami-*  
*lies of the Earth to come up yearly, month-*  
*ly, and weekly to Jerusalem, or if they did*  
*come up, for that one City to contain them?*  
 So again, *out of the same Jerusalem* were to  
 flow *living Waters, half of them to the for-*  
*mer Sea, and half of them to the hinder Sea;*

(i) *If.* LXVI. 23.(k) *Zechar.* XIV. 17.

and

and all the Land south of Jerusalem is to be turn'd as a Plain from Geba to Rimmon (l). Must we suppose this of literal waters and a literal Plain about Jerusalem? Must we also Interpret literally as of an earthly Jerusalem, what is said by Isaiah of the same City, Thou shalt suck the Milk of the Gentiles, and the Breasts of Kings, the Sun shall be no more thy Light by Day, neither for Brightness shall the Moon give Light unto thee; Thy People also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the Land for ever, Thou shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praise? Are we again to take the Holy Mountain of God for a literal Zion, to which all Nations shall flow, where the Wolf should dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid, the Calf, the young Lion, the Cow and the Bear shall Feed together, neither hurting nor destroying in all the Mountain, because the Earth should be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea (m), implying that this Mountain should extend over the whole Earth? Can we imagine that Mountain to be only the terrestrial Hill of Sion, in which the

CHAP.  
VI  
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(l) Id. ib. v. 8, 10.

(m) Isaiah, II. 2. XI. 6, 7, 9. LXV. 25.



CHAP. Lord of Hosts will destroy the Covering cast  
 VI. over all People, and the Veil spread over all  
 Nations. Where he will swallow up Death  
 in Victory, and wipe away tears from all fa-  
 ces (n)? Do not these and other Passages  
 innumerable teach us plainly, that the Pro-  
 phets had in their View, a Jerusalem, a Zion,  
 a Sanctuary more sublime and glorious than  
 those in Judea, and of which these latter  
 were only mention'd as Symbols or Emblems?  
 So evident was this even to many of the  
 Jews, that Maimonides could lay it down  
 for a Maxim, that the Future State of Hap-  
 piness in the next World is often figuratively  
 stil'd the Mountain of God, the Place of his  
 Holyness, the Court of God, the Tabernacle  
 of God, the Temple of God, and the House of  
 God (o). Solomon Jarchi owns, that the  
 Scripture speaks of a Jerusalem above at the  
 End of Ezechiel (p). Which is likewise con-

(n) *Isaiab.* XXV. 6, 7, 8.

(o) נקראו לה דרך משל חור יהודה ומקום  
 קדשו והעדרת יהודה ואחל יהודה והיכל יהודה  
 ובית יהודה

*Maimon.* de Pœnitent. cap. VIII. §. 6. Ed. Oxon.

(p) בירושלים של מעלה משתעי קרא  
 בסוף ירוקאל

*Solom. Jarchi.* ap. Edzard. Præf. ad Aved. Zara. p. 9.  
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fels'd by David Kimchi (q). Hence does Chap. VI.  
 Rabbi Alsebeck acknowledge it, as a thing  
 well known from the writings of the antient  
 Jews, that the future Redemption, with which  
 is connected the Third Temple, is a spiritual  
 work of God (so I translate him) and not  
 like the former Redemptions (r) or Deli-  
 verances. Another goes so far, as to deny,  
 that his Nation will ever possess the Land of  
 Judea a third time (s). And others pronounce  
 very roundly, what is most surprizing,  
 that the whole Transaction of the Messiah  
 is of a Divine or Spiritual kind, and not  
 carnal (t). Nay the same Author discourses

וְכִי אֵיכָא יְרוּשָׁלַם לְמַעְלָה אֵי דְכְתוּב. &c.

Kimchi. ibid.

(י) יְדוּעַ מֶרְזֵל כִּי הַנְּאֻלָּה הַעֲתִידָה שְׁעִמָּה

בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי רִחוּנִי מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים אִמָּה

בְּנֵאֻלֹת הַקֹּדֶמֶת

R. Alsebeck. ap. Edzard. ub. sup.

Conf. Vorst. in Abarbanel. Cap. Fid. p. 68.

(י) אֵי יִכּוֹל וְהִי לָכֵם יְדוּעָה שְׁלִישִׁתָּה

שְׁלִישִׁתָּה אֵי לָכֵם

Seder. olam Rabba. ap. Vorst. ub. sup. p. 69.

(י) כִּי עֲנֵן הַמֶּשִׁיחַ הוּא אֱלֹהִים לֹא נִשְׁמָה

R. Judah Bezael. F. ap. Rhenferd. Secul. Fut.

Diff. II. §. 41.

K k

else

CHAP. elsewhere of the *Days* of the *Messiah* in a  
 VI. Stile so much like the *Christian*, that I cannot  
 forbear transcribing it. We say, the  
*Messiah* is to come, in order to instruct and  
 perfect the *World* (i. e. Mankind) that we  
 may be qualified to obtain the *Resurrection*  
 from the *Dead*, and *Life* in the next *World*.  
 The *Times* of the *Messiah* are calculated for  
 no other *End*, but that *Men* may attain to a  
 higher degree of *Purity* and *Happiness* here-  
 after, because it is impossible, that *Man* should  
 rise at once from the lowest degree of things,  
 such as this *World* is, to the highest, which  
 is the *Resurrection* of the *Dead* and the *Fu-*  
*ture State*. And the only *Business* and *De-*  
*sign* of the *Messiah* is, to advance us *Crea-*  
*tures* gradually from one degree of *Excellence*  
 to another, till they arrive at the highest  
 pitch of *Perfection* (u). Upon which *Pass-*  
*age* the very learned and ingenious *Rhen-*  
*ferd* makes this proper *Reflection*. From  
 hence it may appear, what high *Notions* many  
*Jews* entertain of the *Messiah's Office*, and  
 how much nobler *Blessings* they promise to  
 themselves from *Him*, than our *Christians*

(u) See his Words at length in *Rhenferd*. ub. sup. §. 39.  
 And the Reader may find several Passages no less extra-  
 ordinary from other *Rabbis* in the same curious *Dissertation*.



generally imagine, who think they dream of **CHAP.**  
 nothing but corporeal Enjoyments in their **VI.**  
 Messiah's Kingdom (w). However if some  
 Jews wiser and deeper than the general Mass  
 of that People are thus refin'd in their No-  
 tions, we may presume, it could proceed  
 from nothing but an obvious Sense of the  
 Prophets in favour of such Notions, since  
 their National Prejudices and Expectations  
 lay all on the other Side. They saw, 'tis  
 probable, upon a nicer Inspection, how the  
 Prophets had temper'd or qualified their Al-  
 lusions to Temporal Things, making use of  
 them so far as might suit the Ideas and affect  
 the Passions of the People at that time,  
 and by this means, upon the Promises of a  
 marvellous Deliverance under a future Mes-  
 siah, preserve them the most effectually in  
 a steady Adherence to the Service of the  
 true God, without despondency under the  
 heaviest Calamities; and at the same time  
 superadding such Circumstances to them,  
 as might intimate sufficiently a Sense of it  
 much superior to the literal Sense of many  
 Words, and caution the Judicious against  
 too strict an Interpretation of the latter.

(w) Rosenkr. ibid. §. 40.

CHAP.

VI.

AND now having thus far represented in its proper Light, the *prophetical* Character of the *Messiah*, let us examine what you suggest of our Lord's *renouncing all claim and pretensions to it*. Jesus, you say, *never once took upon himself the Character of the Jewish Messiah, in the national Sense of the Jews*. Very true he did not, because the *Jewish Messiah* in the national Sense of the *Jews* was to be a mere *Temporal Prince*, enthron'd in the *Jerusalem* then subsisting, and restoring the Kingdom to Israel in his own Person, with the utter Reduction of all other Princes, by a powerful Invasion and irresistible Success in Arms, and all immediately upon his *first Appearance* among the *Jews*. Whereas the *Kingdom of Jesus* was not to be a *secular Kingdom* of this kind, *not one of this World*, as he certainly declar'd to *Pilate*. But what then? Did he therefore *make no pretensions to the Character of the true Messiah*, as foretold by the *Prophets*, because he did not pretend to that of the *Messiah* in the *national Sense of the Jews*? Every page almost of the *Gospel* speaks the contrary expressly; and tho' you may deny according to your *Notion of the Prophets* the *Justness or Pertinence* of such *Pretensions*.

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VII. 1

X. 23.

sions in Him, which seems to be your *Christ* meaning at the bottom, yet to deny the *Fact* itself of his *taking* the Character upon him of the promis'd *Messiah*, in the real Sense of the Prophets, is denying what every one that will use his Eyes must see to be false, and deserves no answer. But if any Man could possibly doubt it, that *believes* the *Gospel*, Mr. *Locke* will furnish him with Extracts in great abundance to this purpose (x), shewing beyond all contradiction, that however reserv'd and cautious our Saviour might be upon this Head for a time, to prevent any tumultuous Insurrections of the People in his favour as their *King*, and any suspicions in the Roman Governour of seditious Designs in Him against *Cæsar*, yet during the whole Course of his Ministry he gave frequent and strong Intimations (y) to his Disciples and others, that himself was the great *Prophet*, the *Christ*, and the *Son of God* (the known Title of the Messiah among the *Jews*) that was to

(x) *Locke*. Reasonableness of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 106  
— 190. Ed. 8vo.

(y) See *Matt.* XVI. 16, 17. *Mark.* IX. 41. *Luke.* VII. 19, 22, 23. X. 9. *John.* IV. 26. VIII. 28. X. 23.



CHAP. *come into the World*; and therefore sent  
 VI. forth his Disciples to preach the *Kingdom of*  
 Heaven, i.e. the *Kingdom of the Messiah*.  
 But especially toward the Close of his  
 Ministry and Life, and after his Resurrecti-  
 on, when *all things were accomplish'd*, He  
 did assume this *Character* openly and in the  
 strongest Terms. Thus upon his publick  
 Entry into *Jerusalem*, when the People  
 cry'd, *Hosanna to the Son of David*; *Blessed*  
*be the King that cometh in the Name of the*  
*Lord*, he was so far from rebuking the Mul-  
 titude, and disowning that Title, that he  
 said to the *Pharisees*, who were offended at  
 it, *I tell you, that if these should hold their*  
*Peace, the Stones would immediately cry out* (z).  
 So again, he tells his Disciples, *When the*  
*Son of Man shall come in his Glory*, and all  
 the *Holy Angels with him*, then shall he sit  
 on the *Throne of his Glory*, and before him  
 shall be gather'd all *Nations &c.* Then shall  
 the King say to them on his right Hand,  
*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the*  
*Kingdom prepared for you from the Founda-*  
*tion of the World* (a). And when he was  
 examin'd before *Pilate*, as to the Charge

(z) *Matt. XXI. 9, &c. Luke. XIX. 39, 40.*

(a) *Mattb. XXV. 31, 32, 34.*

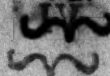
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alledg'd against him by the Jews, He denies indeed that his Kingdom was of this World, but a Kingdom he plainly does claim to himself at the same time, by saying, *If my Kingdom were of this World, then would my Servants fight, that I should not be deliver'd by the Jews; but my Kingdom is not from hence.* And when Pilate upon these words asks him with some sharpness and surprise, *Art thou a King then?* He answers positively, *Thou sayest, that I am a King i. e. by a known Hebraism, Thou sayest right, I am a King, tho' not of this World (b).* To the like effect was his answer to the High Priest, who adjur'd him by the living God, to tell them *whether he were the Christ the Son of God*; Jesus saith unto them, *Thou hast said i. e. as St. Mark represents it (c), Thou hast said the Truth, I am the Christ. Moreover I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven (d).* Hence it was, that when Peter declar'd to our Lord, *Thou art the Christ (or Messiah) the Son of the living God*, Jesus acknowledges the Title plainly by say-

(b) *John. XVIII. 36, 37.*(c) *Mark. XIV. 62.*(d) *Matth. XXVI. 63, 64.*

CHAP.

VI



ing, *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jana; for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven* (e). From which and many other Passages, Mr. Locke observes very justly, that the "great Proposition then controverted concerning *Jesus of Nazareth* was this, whether He was the *Messiah* or not; and the Assent to that, was what distinguish'd *Believers* from *Unbelievers* (f).

HOWEVER, it seems, there must still be no *Appeal* of *Jesus* to the *Prophets*, as if he were the true *Messiah* in *their* Sense; such an *Appeal* is so inconsistent with your *Account* both of *Jesus* and the *Prophets*, that some way or other it must be eluded, and the following *Device* is to do it. *Jesus*, you say, *appeals thus frequently to Moses and the Prophets, as Witnesses of the Truth and genuineness of his Doctrines, as coming from God, and consequently that he could be no Impostor or Deceiver.* How tender and cautious! One would think at first sight, that the *Doctrine* of his being the *Messiah* should be included in those *Doctrines*, to the *Truth* of which the *Prophets* and *Moses* are *appeal'd to as Witnesses.* But

(e) *Matt.* xvi. 16, 17. (f) *Locke. Reason. &c.* p. 26, 27. See this,



this, tho' too glaring to be flatly denied, is yet to be excepted by an oblique Insinuation. For we are told in the next words,

"And every Thing in *Moses* and the Prophets relating to *moral* Truth and Righteousness must be a *Proof* of this, and therefore so far he might fairly urge their *Testimony*. p. 331. So that it seems, the

*Prophets* and *Moses* are appeal'd to only as Witnesses of our Saviour's *moral* Doctrines!

What a puzzled intricate Business would you make of this *Appeal*? 'Tis gracious indeed enough in you, *Philaethes*, to allow

thus much to the *Testimony* of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, when you resolve yourself to

have nothing to do with either in Religion p. 394. But every one will see, that 'tis

mere grimace to compliment *Moses* and the *Prophets* with the Title of Witnesses to the

Truth of any *Doctrines* as coming from God, whom you strip of all *Divine Authority*.

For how are they qualified by your Hypothesis for any such *Testimony* to *Doctrines*,

any more than *You* or *I* or any other Man? Their *Word* in itself is according to

you of no more Weight, than that of *Solon* or *Pythagoras*; and whatever they say re-

lating to *Moral* Truth and Righteousness is

not

CHAP. not to be receiv'd, because *they say it*, but  
 VI. because it is founded in the *natural Relations*  
 and *Fitnesses of things*, and as such appears  
 true to those that read them. So that how-  
 ever they may agree in their *moral Doctrines*  
 with *Jesus Christ*, their sentiments or writ-  
 ings can be no *proof* in any proper Sense of  
 his *Doctrines as coming from God* upon your  
 Scheme, because *their Doctrine itself never*  
*came from God* by supernatural Revelation.  
 But omitting this Difficulty, is it really  
 true after all, that *Jesus* appeals to the *Pro-*  
*phets* only as *witnesses* to his *Moral Doctrine*,  
 and not in the least as witnesses to his *Quality*  
 and *Office* as the promis'd *Messiah*? If so in-  
 deed, 'tis true enough, what you elsewhere  
 assert, that no Man can be *certain of the de-*  
*terminate Sense* of the sacred Writers; for  
 every appeal almost in the Testament of *Je-*  
*sus* to the *Prophets* would seem to be express  
 against it. Take for instance the following  
 Passages from *St. Luke*: Speaking of our Sa-  
 viour's Discourse with the two Disciples in  
 their way to *Emmaus*, the *Historian* relates  
 that *Jesus* said unto them, *O foolish and slow*  
*of heart to believe all that the Prophets have*  
*spoken! Ought not Christ (or the Messiah) to*  
*have suffer'd these things, and to enter into*  
 his

his Glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (f). And afterwards appearing to the Eleven at Jerusalem Jesus saith unto them v. 44, &c. These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ (or the Messiah) to suffer, and to rise again the third Day, and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preach'd in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Is this now an appeal to Moses and the Prophets, in things relating to Moral Truth and Righteousness? Are they cited only as Witnesses to the Truth of such Doctrines? Nothing like it; It is as plain, as any one Sentence in your Book, that the Appeal is made by Jesus to them concerning the Messiah, and himself under that Character; what He was to do and suffer upon Earth as such, and how he was to rise again from the Dead,

(f) Luke XXIV. 25, 26, 27.



CHAP. and enter into his Glory, and carry on the great and glorious Work of our Redemption from Sin and Misery. "Here we see, says

"Mr. Locke, what it was he had preach'd "to them, tho' not in so plain open words "before his Crucifixion; and what it is he "now makes them understand, and what it "was that was to be preach'd to all Nati- "ons viz. That He was the *Messiah*, that "had suffer'd, and rose from the Dead, and "fulfill'd all things that were written in the "Old Testament concerning the *Messiah*: "And that those who believ'd this and re- "pented, should receive Remission of Sins "thro' Faith in him (g). So that it appears beyond dispute from hence alone, that our Lord was so far from renouncing the Character of the *Prophetical Messiah*, that he founded his whole *Εὐαγγέλιον* or Gospel of glad Tidings upon it, and St. John assures us, xx. 31. that these things are written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah, and that believing we might have Life thro' his Name. So strongly does the "Scripture, as we now have it, lean to- "wards *Judaism* in this great Article; so "strict a Connection does it introduce be-

(g) Locke. Reasonableness &c. p. 190.

"tween

“tween that and Christianity: which I see CHAP. VI.  
no other way to evade, but by either expunging all Passages of this kind, as what you hint to be alter’d or interpolated in the original Books, or by stoutly despising in your way the Grammatical Construction of words, and all those Critics and Theologasters that follow it.

BUT whatever you may think of the matter, *Philaletbes*, we affirm, that *Jesus* did not only thus appeal to the Prophets, but that he appeal’d to them upon just and solid Grounds, and that even in the plain Sense of those Writers he appears to be the promis’d Messiah. All the Circumstances relating to the first Advent of the Messiah were in Him, as others have shewn at large against the Jews, most punctually accomplished. He was born in *Bethlehem* (b), of a Virgin (i), of the Family of *David* (k), under the second Temple (l), and when the Scepter was departed from *Judah* (m). The Spirit of the Lord most evidently rested upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge (n). He was just and lowly, and

(b) *Micab*. V. 2.

(i) *Isaiab*. VII. 14.

(k) *Isaiab*. XI. 9, 10.

(l) *Malac*. III. 1.

(m) *Gen*. XLIX. 10.

(n) *Isaiab*. XLII. 1, 4.

CHAP. came riding upon an Ass (o). He opened  
 VI. the Eyes of the Blind and the Ears of the  
 Deaf, he caused the Lame to leap as an  
 Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to sing;  
 He brought them that sat in Darkness out of  
 the Prison, he was for a Covenant to the Peo-  
 ple, and for a Light to the Gentiles, and  
 Salvation to the Ends of the Earth (p). He  
 was a Prophet like unto Moses (q) in Legis-  
 lative Authority, by whom a new Law pro-  
 ceeded out of Sion (r). He was a Man of  
 Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, he was  
 wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised  
 for our Iniquities (s). They gave him Gall  
 to eat and Vinegar to drink, for his Vesture  
 did they cast lots, and pierced his hands  
 and his feet (t); He was cut off after three-  
 score and two weeks from the going forth of  
 the Commandment to restore and build Jeru-  
 salem (u); And after Death ascended up on  
 high, leading Captivity Captive, and gave  
 gifes unto Men (w). Thus far he fulfill'd  
 the Prophecies to the greatest exactness, in  
 the State of Humiliation and Suffering be-

(o) Zech. IX. 9.

(p) Is. XXXV. XL, LII.

(q) Deut. VIII. 15.

(r) Micah. IV. 2.

(s) Is. LIII.

(t) Ps. XXII. 16, 18.

(u) Dan. IX. 26.

(w) Ps. LXXVIII. 18.

longing



longing to the *Messiah*; and from thence as **CHAP.**  
 he was highly exalted in Heaven, and in- **VI**  
 vested with a *Regal Authority*, above all   
*Principalities and Powers at the right Hand*  
*of God*, that at the Name of *Jesus* every  
*knee should bow, of things in Heaven and*  
*in Earth* (x), and is crowned with *Glory*  
*and Honour* (y), what should hinder his be-  
 ing the *Prince, King, and Ruler over Israel*  
 &c. of the Prophets, tho' not precisely at  
 the time, and in the manner, wherein the  
*Jews* expected him to reign? The Misap-  
 prehensions among them of the *Prophetic*  
*Kingdom* are no Argument to us of the true  
*Intention* of the *Prophets*, or a Rule for the  
 Application of them. And their great mis-  
 takes about them were owing not really, as  
 they pretend, to the *obvious Sense* of the  
 Prophets, but to their imperfect View of  
 the *whole Sense* of the Prophets, to their In-  
 attention to some *plain Passages*, and too  
 strong an Attention to others, to their ar-  
 bitrary Determination of things in the *Pro-*  
*phetic Scheme* to *wrong Times and Seasons*,  
 and to their great Partiality to their own  
 Nation, in restraining prophetic Blessings  
 from the great *Messiah* to themselves, in

(x) *Philipp. ii. 7, 8.*

(y) *Heb. ii. 10.*

from

CHAP. VI. which all Nations were to have their portion. Take therefore the Prophecies as they are in themselves, in their due and plain Extent as to *Persons* and *Times*, and in their real Disposition of predicted Events at their several Periods and Distances, and all the Difficulties in applying them to *Jesus* will soon disappear; because as he has hitherto fulfill'd several of them in their proper and obvious Sense, so he may hereafter fulfill all others in their proper and obvious Sense too, in his *Regal* Capacity, and as soon as they were ever design'd to be fulfill'd, in the *Messiah*, as to the visible Exercise of his *Regal* Power in the *Tabernacle of David*, over the House of *Israel*.

BUT whatever Truth there may be in this Doctrine, your great Concern is for the *Jews*, whom you judge incapable of Conviction upon such Principles, and because their national Sense of the Prophets is so different from the *Christian*, you pronounce, "it will be impossible for us to convince them upon Jewish Principles, and you offer this to the consideration of the Learned; either I suppose, as a Reason for their not persisting in the *Christian* Interpretation of the Prophets, or for not attempting and hoping

to convert any Jew upon it. Why truly Chap. VI.  
 it may be *impossible* to convince the Jews upon *Jewish* Principles i. e. upon the No-  
 tions generally prevailing among them con-  
 cerning the *Messiah*, of his being a mere  
*Temporal* Prince upon his *first* Advent, as  
 represented above; But *impossible* it certain-  
 ly is not upon true *prophetic* Principles;  
 which are widely different from the other,  
 and might soon convince the *Jews* of their  
 Errors, if once they were carefully attended  
 to, and rightly understood. And to shew  
 you how *possible* this is, I could give you  
 some hundreds of Instances in *Fact*, of Jews  
 acknowledging at last their former Misap-  
 prehensions of the *Propbets*, and sincerely  
 converted to the *Christian* Faith, by a deeper  
 Enquiry and Insight into the Sense of those  
 Writers. But being sensible, how incredi-  
 ble any *antient* Narratives of this sort may  
 sound in your Ears at present, I shall con-  
 fine myself wholly to more *modern* Times,  
 and may perhaps surprise you with a secret  
 History, which you seem to be little ac-  
 quainted with, from Authors of great  
 Learning and unquestionable Credit. Take  
 therefore the following Accounts of con-  
 verted *Jews*, as a few Instances out of many



CHAP. that might be given, in the Order of the  
VI. Hebrew Alphabet.

*Aaron Margalitha*, once a *Rabbi* or Doctor among the Poland Jews, was instructed in the Christian Religion and baptiz'd by the famous *Triglandius* at *Leiden*, and became afterwards Professor of *Jewish* Antiquities in the University of *Francfort* upon *Oder*, where he publish'd In the Year 1706 a Treatise of the *Sufferings* of Christ, analogous to the 53<sup>d</sup> Chapter of *Isaiab*. Among other pieces, which he left behind him when he died, one was an Answer to some Queries propos'd to him by the then King of *Prussia* concerning the *Kingdom* and *Office* of the *Messiah*, discussing and explaining the very Point we are speaking of, which was found and is still preserv'd among his Manuscript Papers (z).

*Ernestus Maximilian Borg*, convinc'd of the Truth of *Christianity* by the 53<sup>d</sup> Chapter of *Isaiab*, and baptiz'd in Consequence of it at *Wratisslaw*. He publish'd in the Year 1722 at *Hamburg* an extraordinary Book, the Title of which in English is, *The*

(z) Vid. Clariss. *Wolffii*. Biblioth. Heb. Tom. I. p. 124. Tom. III. p. 77.

Christian Doctrine built upon Moses and the Prophets (a). CHAP. VI.

*Ernestus Christianus Zarvossi*, a celebrated Rabbi among the Jews for 18 Years together was in 1668 baptiz'd at *Gotba*, upon the Day of *St. Paul's* Conversion, and liv'd afterwards in great Repute at *Jene* and *Altorf* (b).

*Antonius Margaritba*, of the same Family with *Aaron* abovemention'd, baptiz'd at *Wasserburg* in *Bavaria* 1522, and taught the Hebrew Tongue at *Vienna*. Among other Works he wrote a critical Exposition of the 53d Chapter of *Isaiab*, in which he set forth at large the exact Correspondence of the *Old* Testament with the *New*, with respect to that particular Prophecy. This Exposition was printed at *Vienna* in the Year 1534 (c).

*David Hieronymus*, call'd while a Jew *R. Jacob Melammed*, was converted to the Christian Religion by the famous and most excellent *Esdra Edzardus*, and baptiz'd with his Wife and six Children *Jun. 6.*

(a) *Wolf*. *ibid.* Tom. III. p. 88. Tom. IV. p. 775.

(b) *Wolf*. *ibid.*

(c) *Wolf*. *ibid.* Tom. I. p. 202, &c. Tom. III. p. 129.

*Fabric.* *Delect. Argum.* cap. 31. p. 578.

CHAP. 1676. He had before been a Teacher among his Brethren the Jews, six Years at Cracow, five at Vienna, and fourteen at Hamburg; And after his Conversion, publish'd both the Arguments by which he was perswaded to it, and likewise a Confession of his Faith. The remainder of his Life he spent chiefly at Berlin, and was there successful in converting some others of his Brethren to the same Faith. He died in the Year 1713 (d).

Joannes Baptista Renati, wrote a Book against the Jews with this Title in Italian, *Disputa contra gli Hebrei, provando gli per tutte questa profezie, il vero Messia esser venuto; i. e. A Disputation against the Hebrews proving thro' all the Prophecies, that the true Messiah is already come.* Printed at Milan. 1621 (e).

Joannes Isaacus Levita, a German Jew, converted upon a diligent Study and Collation of the Prophets, and afterwards Professor of Hebrew at Cologne 1553. He was a Man of extraordinary Capacity and Learning, and was the Author of a famous and

(d) Wolf. *ibid.* Tom. I. p. 295. Tom. III. p. 183.

Kidder. *Demonst. of Mess.* P. III. p. 201. Fol.

(e) Wolf. *ibid.* Tom. III. p. 355.



excellent Book against *Lindanus*, entitul'd *CHAP. VI.*  
*Defensio Veritatis Hebraicae* (f).

*Ioannes Xeres*, a Jew of *Barbary*, well skill'd in *Arabic* and *Chaldee* besides *Hebrew*, was converted here in *England* by *Dr. Peter Allix*, and publish'd at *London* in 1711. *An Address to the Jews, shewing his Motives for embracing the Christian Religion* (g).

*Joannes Christlieb Heilbronner*, of *Cracow*, whose former Name was *Mosche Praeger*, baptiz'd at *Heilbron* in 1709, and still living at *Dresden* in 1727. He wrote a Treatise in the *German Language* on the 53d Chapter of *Isaiab*; in the Preface to which he declares, that chiefly by Meditation on that Chapter he was brought to the Acknowledgment and Belief of *Jesus Christ*. This was printed in 1710. And five Years after, he publish'd at *Dresden* a small Piece concerning *Jesus Christ the true Messiah and Son of God*, with an Appendix shewing, what sort of *Messiah* the Jews generally expect. And in the Year 1718, he publish'd another at *Hamburg* in answer

(f) *Wolf* ibid. Tom. I. p. 473. Tom. III. p. 357. Tom. IV. p. 842.

*Rich. Simon*. Hist. Crit. Vet. Test. Lib. III. cap. 17.

(g) *Wolf* ibid. Tom. I. p. 480. Tom. IV. p. 844.

CHAP. to the Jewish Exceptions against the Gene-  
 VI. alogy of our blessed Saviour, recorded in  
 the Gospel. The Character, which is gi-  
 ven to this Man by the learned *Wolfius*, is  
 too material to be omitted. *Ille quidem in-  
 tegre fidei Homo mihi semper visus est, &  
 de Veritate Religionis Christianæ, si quis  
 alius, persuasissimus, ac præterea inter va-  
 rias Calamitates animo constanti & in spem  
 meliorem erecto. Nunc quidem Dresdæ for-  
 tunâ satis prosperâ fruitur, & vitam honestè  
 sustentat (b).*

*Joannes Salomo*, a Polander, and cele-  
 brated Rabbi, baptiz'd at *Gedan* in 1657,  
 and made Professor there of the Hebrew  
 Tongue. Among other Works, he pub-  
 lish'd one to prove by variety of Argu-  
 ments, that *Jesus Christ* with the Father  
 and Holy Ghost is the one true and eternal  
 God, and acknowledg'd as such in the Old  
 Testament. He died in 1683 (i).

*Jacob Fundam*, a Spaniard by Birth, pub-  
 lish'd at *Amsterdam* in 1726 a remarkable  
 Work in the Dutch Language, the Title of  
 which is thus express'd by my Author in  
 Latin. *Messias Princeps ex scriptis Prophe-*

(b) *Wolf. ibid. Tom. III. p. 363.*

(i) *Wolf. ibid. Tom. I. p. 480. Tom. III. p. 364.*

tarum investigatus, per modum veræ & fin- CHAP.  
ceræ Confessionis Christianæ Veritatis, contra VI.  
errores & infelicem Scripturæ interpretatio-  
nem Judaicam (k).

*Ludovicus Compiègne de Veil* of Meaux in France, a Youth of fine Parts and for some Years an Expositor of the Talmud among his Brethren, was baptiz'd at Compiègne in the Year 1655, and had the Honour of having the King and Queen of France for his Sponsors. After living some Years among the Catholics, he at length went over to the Protestants, and taught Hebrew in the University of Heidelberg for some time; from whence he remov'd at last into England, and employ'd his time chiefly here in translating and publishing Jewish Books, and especially those of the celebrated *Maimonides*; several of which were printed at London, and are still in high esteem with the Learned (l).

*Mauritius Wilbelmus Christiani*, so nam'd at his Baptism, which was given him in 1715 at *Schleusingen* in Germany, where be-

(k) Wolf. *ibid.* Tom. IV. p. 870.

(l) Wolf. *ibid.* Tom. I. p. 723. Tom. III. 645. Tom. IV. 891. *Wagenfeil.* Supplem. MS. ad Buxtorf. Biblieth. Rab. ap. Wolf. *ibid.*



VI. printed in 1726 at *Erssus* a large Narrative of his own Conversion, to which he added a *Discourse* which he deliver'd in publick upon that Occasion, proving that *Jesus Christ* is the true *Messiah*, and that in the *Divine Nature* subsist three *Persons*.

He was well known to the great *Wolfius* himself, and is handsomely commended by him in the following Expressions. *Fuit is etiam apud nos, mihiq; ab Eruditione probisque & honestis moribus multum se commendavit. Jam Bremæ in instituendis literarum Rabbinarum & Talmudicarum tirociniis cum Laude versatur (m).*

*Immanuel Tremellius*, of *Ferrara* in *Italy*, converted from *Judaism* in the Infancy of the Reformation, and himself a constant adherer to it, and a zealous promoter of it. He publish'd in the Year 1554 with a Preface address'd in the most affectionate stile to the Jews, for whose Use and Benefit he design'd the Tract subjoynd to it, a *Hebrew* Catechism, containing in short the Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion; and dedicated to *Christopher* Duke of *Wirtenburg*. He also in Conjunction

(m) Wolf. *ibid.* Tom. III. 566. Tom. IV. 895.

with

with *Franciscus Junius* translated into *Latin* from the *Hebrew* all the Books of the Old Testament, as likewise those of the New from the *Syriac* Version. For which laborious Works he has justly deserv'd an *Encomium*, whatever Imperfections or Errors may be found in them (n).

*Fabianus Freggi*, an Italian Jew, converted in the Year 1559, and made Professor of Hebrew at *Rome*. He was a Man of considerable Abilities, and wrote a large Folio Book in the Form of a Dialogue between a *Catechumen* and *Catechist*, wherein he answer'd fully and solidly all the Jewish Objections against the Christian Faith in above fourscore Chapters. The Character, which the Learned *Wolffius* has given of this performance is very observable. *Commentatio hæc præter plerorumque Ex-judæorum morem satis solide et curatè est conscripta, sine intermissis gravioribus in Judæos Criminationibus, à quibus sibi Ex-judæi alioguin non temperant (o).*

(n) *Wolff* ibid. Tom. I. 952. Tom. III. 882 — 887.

(o) *Wolff* ibid. Tom. III. p. 894 — 897. Conf. Tom.

I. p. 961. Tom. IV. 948.

*Fabric. Delect. Argum. cap. xxxi. p. 581.*

CHAP. *Paulus Burgenfis*, an Eminent Jew of  
 VI. *Burgos* in Spain, and call'd before his Bap-  
 tism, as *Abarbanel* testifies, *Solomon Levita*.  
 He was converted to the Christian Religion  
 A.D. 1390 in the 40th year of his Age, and  
 brought over with him his Wife, Sons, and  
 Brothers. After several Gradations he ar-  
 riv'd at last to the Patriarchate of *Aquileia*,  
 to which his great Worth, Capacity and  
 Services to Religion had justly exalted him.  
 In the 84th year of his Age he publish'd a  
 great work for those Days in Folio, enti-  
 tled *Scrutinium Scripturarum*, divided in-  
 to 2 parts; the first of which is directed  
 wholly against the Jews, and consists of the  
 following curious Articles. *Distinction*  
 the first, in 4 Chapters, treats of the Persons,  
 who were to be sav'd or redeem'd by the  
 Messiah. The second likewise in 4 Chap-  
 ters, treats of the Calling of the Gentiles to  
 the Dignity of Israelites. The third in as  
 many Chapters, of the Time of the Messiah's  
 Advent. The fourth, in as many Chapters,  
 Of the Gathering of the *Jews* by the *Messiah*.  
 The fifth in eleven Chapters, Of the Na-  
 ture and Manner of the Redemption of Is-  
 rael by the Messiah. The sixth in six Chap-  
 ters, Of the Extent of this Redemption as



to Time, whether it is carried backwards CHAP. VI.  
to those of *past* Ages, as well as towards  
those of the *present* and *future*. The se-  
venth in 13 Chapters. Of the *Kingdom* of  
the Messiah. The eighth in 16 Chapters.  
Of the *Innovation* of the *Law* in the Days  
of the Messiah. The ninth in 17 Chapters,  
Of the *Mystery* of the *Holy Trinity*. The  
tenth in 9 Chapters. Of the *Divinity* of  
the Messiah (o). These are the Heads of  
the first Part, and whoever will peruse the  
Book itself, tho' written without purity of  
*Latin*, and sometimes without accuracy in  
Sentiments) will I believe think his time  
and pains well bestow'd, if I may judge of  
others by myself, from the pleasure and satis-  
faction it has given me. Thus far the Emi-  
nence of the Man, and the Usefulness of his  
Work led me out of the Way, for which,  
I hope, no Apology is necessary.

*Paulus Weidnerus*, a Physician by Pro-  
fession of *Vienna*, baptiz'd A. D. 1558 to-  
gether with his Wife and 4 Children. He  
afterwards was made Professor of *Hebrew*

(o) *Wolf. ibid.* Tom. lli. p. 897 — 907. Conf. Tom. i.  
p. 963.

*Fabric. Delect. Argum.* p. 575. 576.

*Rich. Simon. Hist. Crit. Vet. Test. L.* 3. c. xi.

CHAP. at Vienna, and first Physician in Ordinary to  
 N<sup>o</sup> 4 the Emperor, to whom he dedicated a  
 large Book in Vindication of the Christians  
 against the Jews, entitul'd, *Loca præcipua  
 Fidei Christianæ, collecta et explicata a Paulo  
 Weidnero, Philosophiæ et Medicinæ Doctore,  
 ex Judaismo ad Fidem Christi converso*. A.  
 1559. This Man had frequent Conferen-  
 ces with the Jews in their Synagogues, and  
 was so successful in them, that many of  
 them he convinc'd of their Errors, and sett-  
 led them in the Christian Faith (p).

*Philippus Ernestus Christfels*, call'd be-  
 fore his Conversion *Mordécai Ben Moïse*,  
 baptiz'd A. D. 1701, at *Wilhemsdorf*. He  
 had written with great Zeal against the  
 New Testament, but after a more careful  
 Study and Collation of the Old Testament  
 with the New, finding an exact Correspon-  
 dence between the one and the other, he  
 grew sensible of his former Misconduct, and  
 embrac'd Christianity. He was still living  
 in the Court of Count *Schillinsfurst* in 1733,  
 and publish'd several valuable Works (q).

(p) *Wolf*. ib. Tom. i. p. 964. Tom. iii. p. 906.

*Bayle*. Diction. Tom. iv. Ed. 1720.

(q) *Wolf*. ib. Tom. iii. p. 912. Tom. iv. p. 954.

Messiah of the Prophets.

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Philippus Nicolaus Lebrecht, al. Joseph Jacob, baptiz'd at Pforzheim in Germany A. D. 1715. He publish'd a curious Piece in the German Language in the year 1715, of which the following Account is given by Wolfius. *In parte priore Doctrina Judaeorum de duobus Messis, ac felicitate cum adventu Messiae aliquando conjungenda edisseritur; posteriore autem eadem ex V. T. scriptisque Talmudicis et aliis Judaeorum antiquissimis monumentis consutatur.* To which he adds from his own personal Knowledge of him a very good Character of the Man, as to Temper and Morals (r).

Philippus Ferdinandus, render'd eminent among the Learned by being Preceptor to the great Joseph Scaliger in Talmudical Knowledge. He died in 1598, and drew the following Expressions of Grief and Affection from his noble Disciple. *Non possum dissimulare, mi Drusi, dolorem, quem ex Morte Philippi Ferdinandi ex Judaeo Christiani capio: qui neque pro aetate mature, neque pro Studiis meis opportune nos dereliquit. Jam multa in Talmud magno cum fructu, neque minore voluptate, una legemus. Ex quo ille in morbum incidit, nihil*

(r) Wolf. ib. Tom. iii. p. 933. 934. Tom. iv. p. 954.



CHAP. *Hebraicarum literarum attigi ut ipse mihi*  
 VI. *Hebraismus lugere videatur. — Hoc serio*  
 *affirmare possum, me ab eo didicisse, quod*  
*præter Judæos nemo me docere poterat (s).*

*Felix Pratensis*, an Italian, and a Rabbi of great Note for many years among the Jews, converted to the Christian Faith A. D. 1518. He was a Man of that Capacity, Learning and Eloquence, that in Rome by his frequent Discourses with the Jews, he converted great Multitudes of them to the same Faith, and from thence had the Title of *Flagellum Hebræorum*. It is to him that we are indebted for *Bomberg's* famous Edition of the Hebrew Bible with *Rabbinical Comments* at Venice, and the first Account of the *Various Lections* of the *Eastern* and *Western* Jews. He died at Rome in 1539 (t).

*Fredericus Rastatt de Weile*, a Native of *Lorrain*, whose Father had been Doctor and Prefect of various Synagogues, and himself design'd by a learned Education for the same Honours. But being excited to a diligent Examination of the Prophets, by the

(s) *Josepb. Scalig. Epist. 293. Lib. 3.*

*Conf. Wolf. Tom. i. p. 979. Tom. iii. p. 934.*

(t) *Wolf. ib. Tom. i. p. 981. Tom. iii. p. 935.*

*Conf. Hody. Biblior. Text. Orig. L. iii. p. 461.*

Old tradition of *Elias* among the Jews con-  
cerning the *Messiah*, he perceiv'd at last, that *Jesus* was the Person to whom they  
all evidently pointed, and that his Brethren's  
Exceptions to him were ground'd on mere  
Dreams and gross Misapprehensions. This  
*Wolfius* relates from the Man's own words  
in a *Dutch* account of his Conversion. He  
was accordingly baptiz'd at *Cleves* in the  
year 1671, wrote an excellent piece in De-  
fense of Christianity against the Jews, em-  
prov'd and augmented in 3 Editions, and  
liv'd the Envy of the Circumcision, and an  
Ornament to his new Profession. *Ex omni-  
bus his nostris scriptis apparet, cum non solum  
candidè Christianam Doctrinam professum  
esse, sed veritatem ejus ingenio & doctrinâ  
ita adstruxisse, ut merito decus & ornamen-  
tum Ex-Judæorum habeatur (u).*

*Carolus Maria de Veile*, Brother to *Lu-  
dovicus de Veile* abovemention'd, and con-  
verted in *France* about the same time. He  
had there a *Canonry* first, and afterwards  
a *Priory* confer'd upon him, together with  
the Degree of *Doctor* in Divinity. But not  
liking his Situation among the *Romanists*,

(u) *Wolf.* ib. Tom. iii. p. 948, 949, 950. Tom. iv. p.  
959, 960. *Bayle.* Crit. Diction. Ed. 1720.

CHAP. he came over into England in 1676 or VI. 1677, and became a *Presbyter* of the Church establish'd, and lived chiefly at *Fulham*. He was much esteem'd by the Learned here, and had a particular Intimacy with the Hon. Mr. *Boyle*, to whom he wrote an Epistle animadverting on Father *Simon's* Critical History of the Old Testament. He was Author likewise of some Comments on several Parts of Scripture, of which those on the minor *Prophets* are especially valuable (w).

*Christianus Gerson*, baptiz'd at *Halbetstadt* A. D. 1600, and afterwards Pastor of a Church at *Drobelen* in the Dutchy of *Brunsvic*. He was, says *Wolffius*, *Ex-fu-dæus præstantissimus & constantissimus*; and is mention'd with particular Marks of Honour by many other learned Men, as *Wagenfæll*, *Carpzov*, Father *Simon*, *Reimman* &c. What gain'd him this extraordinary Reputation, was the great Candor; Exactness, and Perspicuity, with which he set forth and confuted the many Errors and Superstitions of his Brethren the Jews (x).

(w) *Wolf*. Tom. I. p. 1007. Tom. iii. p. 973.

(x) See *Wolf*. Tom. i. p. 1008. Tom. iii. p. 966. Tom. iv. p. 965.



*Christianus Meier*, of *Hamburg*, baptiz'd at *Breme*, and still living in the year 1727. He wrote among other Pieces, one entitul'd *Vera Immanuelis generatio*, which is part of a *Hebrew* Tract he had compos'd, to evince from various Prophecies of the Old Testament that *Jesus* is the true *Messiah*. The learned *Wolfius* had seen the whole, and from him I take this account of it (x).

CHAP.  
VI.  
~

*Christian Friedenreich*, publish'd likewise in the German Language a little Book, under the *Hebrew* title of *Sepher Emetb Veemunah* i. e. *The Book of true Faith*, shewing from *Moses* and the Prophets, that *Jesus Christ* is the true *Messiah*. It was printed in the year 1722. (y).

*Christopher Gustav Christian*, baptiz'd at *Norimberg* in 1719, and in the same year printed at *Berlin* a Book *Concerning the Grounds of the Christian Faith*, argued from *Moses* and the Prophets (z).

*Christopher Paulus Meier*, a celebrated *Rabbi* once at *Francfort upon the Main*, and baptiz'd at *Northuscb* A. D. 1673. The occasion of his Conversion is very remarke-

(x) *Wolf*. Tom. iii. p. 979.

(y) *Wolf*. *ibid*.

(z) *Wolf*. *ibid*. Tom. iii. p. 981.

CHAP. VI. able, as related by *Wolffius*, from the Man's own Words. *Inter cætera profitetur, occa-*

*sionem de veritate Judaismi dubitandi natam sibi esse ex iis, quæ de Pseudo-Messia Sabbatai Sevi falsò fuerant venditata, et quod perspiceret Messiam Regem Mundanum, qualem sibi Judæi fingunt, ex miseriis spiritualibus liberare neminem posse.* Accordingly in the Year 1685 he publish'd his *Speculum stultitiæ Judaicæ*, in which he expos'd at large the Jewish Notion of the Messiah's being a Secular Prince(a).

*R. Shemuel Nachmias*, a Jew of *Venice*, baptiz'd there with his Brother *Joseph*, and his Son *David* A. D. 1649. What gave him, it seems, the first Impression in favour of Christianity, was, he tells us, a publick Dispute that happen'd at *Venice* to which he was present himself, between a Jew and a Convert from Judaism, concerning the Sense and Accomplishment of *Daniel's* Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. In this Dispute *Simeon Luxgato*, a celebrated Venetian Rabbi was chosen Arbitrator by both Parties, and the Condition previously agreed to by the Disputants was,

(a) *Wolff. ib. Tom. i. p. 1010. Tom. iii. p. 982.*

that

that whichever of them lost the Day, should come over to the other's Religion. The Contest was manag'd with great Acumen and Ingenuity on both Sides, but the Christian at last push'd his Arguments against the Jews with so much Strength and Solidity, that the Rabbi himself broke out into these words, "I beseech you, let us be quiet, and shut up our Books; for if we go on examining this Prophecy any farther, we shall all be easily made Christians. It cannot be denied, that here the coming of the Messiah is so clearly set forth, that the Time of it must be allow'd to be already past. But whether Jesus of Nazareth be the Person, I cannot determine. This Speech of the Arbitrator clos'd the Debate, and sunk so deep into our Rabbi Samuel and his Brother Joseph, that from that Day they both immediately thought of renouncing Judaism, and a few Months after upon reconsidering the whole matter seriously and calmly, embraced the Christian Religion. This Man in 1683 publish'd a large Book in Italian with the Hebrew Title of *Derech Emuna* i.e. *The Way of Faith*; in the first Part of which consisting of 12 Chapters, he endeavours to prove to the Jews, that they

M m 2 ought



CHAP. ought not to observe any longer the Law of  
 VI. Moses, but to embrace the Christian Doc-  
 trine of the Gospel. And in his Preface to  
 it, directed by way of Exhortation to his  
 Brethren the Jews, he gives the Story of  
 his Conversion abovesaid. The Charac-  
 ter which the Learned *Wolffius* has given of  
 this Work, shall close this Article, and with  
 it the List of converted Jews. *Commentatio*  
*hæc omnino erudita est, et idoneis Scriptorum*  
*Judaicorum testimoniis superstructa, digna-*  
*que adeo, quæ in plurimum Usum Latine con-*  
*versa extaret (b).*

I COULD add to these, were it necessary,  
 from *Wolffius* alone above a hundred Instan-  
 ces more even of Authors converted from  
 Judaism, not liable to any Suspicions of  
 Fraud and Hypocrisy, like those which  
*Orobio* (c) speaks of in Spain and Portugal  
 for fear of the horrid Inquisition, but volun-  
 tary, constant, and sincere to the last, un-  
 der no apprehensions on one side, or allur-  
 ing Prospects on the other. And the same  
 learned Man informs us likewise, that the  
 great *Esdras Edzardus* at *Hamburg* was  
 so very successful in his own Endeavours, as

(b) *Wolff. ib. Tom. iiii. p. 1126. — 1128.*

(c) *Ap. Limborch. Amic. Collat. p. 102.*

to convert himself some hundreds of Jews to the Christian Faith (d). For which reason Bp. Kidder, who often corresponded with him, said justly of that excellent Divine, That "he had been an Instrument of converting more Jews (among which are a considerable number of Rabbins) than perhaps have ever been converted by any one Person in the World since the Age of Miracles (e). And the same Man was blest'd with two Sons, who inherited their Father's Abilities, and in great measure his Success too among that People.

LET me ask you therefore now, *Philalethes*, why it truly must be thought so impossible to convince the Jews upon Jewish Principles, i. e. upon such Jewish Principles, as in Virtue of their Faith in Moses and the Prophets they justly may and ought to entertain? You may see from this short Account, and by farther Enquiries may see to more advantage, what Numbers of them have been actually convinc'd upon such Principles, and what Grounds there really are in the Prophets for such Conviction. And from what we experience of modern Jews,

(d) Wolf. ib. Tom. iv. p. 491.

(e) Kidder. Demonstrat. of Mess. Part. iii. p. 197. Fol.

CHAP. we may learn to judge more favourably of  
 VI. *antient* Jews, especially as these (many of  
 them at least) had one Argument to persuade  
 them, which the others cannot have, viz.  
*Sensible* Evidence by the most astonishing  
 Miracles of Christ's Divine Mission. Which  
 together with what has been suggested a-  
 bove may discourage us very much from  
 crediting implicitly those two Assertions  
 of your's, that *all* Christian Jews who be-  
 liev'd in Jesus Christ *antiently* as the pro-  
 mis'd Messiah, believ'd in Him as a *Tempo-  
 ral* and *national Deliverer*, and that *no* Jew  
 could ever receive him as such under any o-  
 ther Notion. These Assertions I say, are  
 put into a tottering Condition by plain *Fact*  
 to the contrary in *modern* Jews, and I hope  
 in a following Chapter to overthrow them  
 effectually, by *direct* and *positive* Argu-  
 ments.



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